





*William Gordon*

# FIFTEEN YEARS.

A PICTURE FROM THE LAST CENTURY.

BY

TALVI.

(MRS. THÉRÈSE ROBINSON.)

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## PREFACE TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

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It is my sad privilege to introduce this, the last work of a beloved mother, to the American public. Had she been spared to prepare it for the press of this country herself, she would doubtless have filled out many outlines and explained many allusions which she deemed sufficient for the German reader, for whom the book was originally intended. It is not for my inexperienced hand to supply the deficiency; I leave it to the reader to do so from other sources. In conclusion, I would state that I am indebted, for the admirable translation of the second and third poetical quotations in the fifth chapter, to my highly-venerated friend William C. Bryant, Esq., and take great pleasure in here acknowledging his kindness.

MARY A. ROBINSON.

NEW YORK, *October*, 1870.



DEDICATED  
TO  
MY BELOVED DAUGHTER  
MARY.



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# FIFTEEN YEARS.

A PICTURE FROM THE LAST CENTURY

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## CHAPTER I.

### HUSBAND AND WIFE.

ABOUT one hundred and ten years ago, when Europe seemed on the point of sinking into a heavy political sleep; when in England the struggle of the two dynasties had been irrevocably decided; in France the process of fermentation, from which a new order of society was to be evolved, was as yet apparent to no human eye; while Germany had only just been roused, by the first daring deeds of King Frederick, from its disgraceful self-degradation and unnationality to a certain degree of consciousness—a hundred and ten or twenty years ago it was that the attention of the courts, cabinets, and newspaper readers of Europe—for as yet there was not much question of the people—was directed with peculiar interest toward distant Sweden.

For it was there that, for some ten or twenty years past, the most unheard-of occurrences had taken

place, not, indeed, without the influence of foreign intriguing courts, but yet in true national development.

While the whole of the rest of Continental Europe had, for the past century, been strengthening the power of sovereign absolutism, and citizen and peasant submitted willingly to the most arbitrary despotism of a ruler, if, in so doing, they escaped the pressure of privileged *classes*, and had the satisfaction that squire and knight were obliged to bow *with them* to the same despotism — in Sweden, an overbearing nobility, in league with a pharisaical clergy, had degraded the royal authority to a mere phantom. Only the division of these two orders, both acting with insolent arrogance, into two equally powerful parties, which, by turns, weakly supported the throne or forcibly shook it to its foundations, had preserved it from a complete overthrow.

To the capital of this country, in the year 1755, the same year which preceded the Seven Years' War, I would carry my reader, while I present to him the first scene of a family picture, which had that strangely agitated time for a background.

Count Kronhelm, or, to call him by his full historical name, Count Balke Kronhelm, had only returned about six years before to his much-distracted country. He had spent half his life in travels; chiefly, however, in France and Italy. A zealous friend of art, a ready pupil of Voltaire and of the forerunners of the Encyclopedists, and thoroughly cosmopolitan, he had become completely estranged from his country, when unforeseen circumstances, principally the necessary taking possession of certain inherited estates, had



forced him to return thither, as he hoped, but for a short time. He had found the condition of Sweden, under the pressure of a thoroughly corrupted oligarchy of the nobility, still more hopeless than he had feared. In fact, the count needed all his prudence, as long as the poor old Hessian mock king remained alive, to maintain his independence, and not to be drawn into the ranks either of the *Hats* or the *Caps*, as the two contending parties were called, both of them quite as shameless enemies of popular freedom as of royalty.

But when the new young king, who, just because he found the count so little of a Swede, considered him one of his natural supporters, met him with the greatest confidence; when the queen, the sister of the great Frederick, covered the countess his wife, who was by birth a German, and a subject of her brother, with distinctions, it became more and more difficult for him to adhere to his resolution. Before he was aware of it, he had given his promise to remain in the country. At the solicitation of the king, he accepted the position of lord-chamberlain, found himself drawn into a whirl of intrigues and court festivities, and had become accustomed to them before he was aware of it.

The evening on which our story opens, was one appointed for a grand festival at court, an occasion of special importance. The beautiful Countess Kronhelm sat at her toilet-table, preparing to attend the assembly. Her long, rich, golden hair hung to the carpet over her finely-shaped shoulders and her white dressing-robe, like a protecting veil. Her maid had just cleansed this precious ornament of Nature from

all traces of the toilet and of fashion, had combed and washed out every vestige of powder and pomatum—this had been the work of hours—and had thus prepared it for the new edifice which the court hair-dresser was soon to construct of it.

In the middle of the last century, at which time, as we know, the scene of this picture is laid, even persons of the cleanliest habits could not submit to such a thorough purifying process more than two or three times a week, except under very special circumstances. While the new artistic structure, for which the maid had already prepared all manner of wire-rolls and clean cushions, and brought from the closet boxes of aigrettes, butterflies, artificial flowers, and lace lappets, while this structure would need at least four or five hours for its completion, even the preliminary preparations could not be effected in less than three or four.

The countess had perhaps already passed that age which can dispense with all ornament, for it is only the first freshness of youth which may safely rely entirely upon Nature. Nevertheless, surrounded by her golden veil, freed from all constraint of whalebone and stiffly-starched pads and puffs, she looked so wondrously beautiful, that Ingeborg, her elderly maid, gazed upon her a while almost in amazement. As the countess, merely for the pleasant sensation, took a wide-toothed silver comb, and passed it lightly through her front hair, the other could not help smiling.

"Your ladyship," said she, "looks like a mermaid combing her golden hair! It will be a long while yet before Monsieur Truchon arrives, for he has to

make the grand rounds to-day, on account of the court-ball. Shall I not send up the little counts to help pass away your ladyship's time? They always want to know, when I sing our old songs to them, how the sea-nymph looked that enticed Duke Magnus into the water. The *Strömkarl* I can draw for them, well enough; it is easy to get up such an ugly old *troll*, with his green hair. But of the mermaid they couldn't see a better picture than your ladyship, as you sit there, so strangely beautiful, and so wistful and outlandish, just as if you had come from another world."

The countess laughed. "Well, well, Ingeborg," she said, "don't make a heathen monster of me. To be sure, I am a foreigner, as you know; but, though our hair may be a few shades darker than yours, I can assure you that we Germans are quite as good Christians as you Swedes. Let the dear boys be for the present. I hear their cheery voices in the garden. I don't wish to disturb them in their play. But my daughter may come and read to me, as soon as M. Truchon commences his tedious work. By that time, I suppose, she will have finished her exercise. Give me my book meanwhile, Ingeborg. You may leave me, and attend to your other duties."

Ingeborg handed her the book, a volume of French memoirs, which she had been reading with interest. Now she sat for a long time with the open book in her hand, but her thoughts were far away.

They were with her daughter. She had long felt that the Frenchwoman—for fashion required a French governess—who had charge of her was not the proper person for this position. For some time already the

young girl had intellectually outgrown her. Caritas, at fourteen, had a clear, inquiring mind. An innate pride, inherited from her own father, combined with the skeptic, philosophical trifling of her step-father, which, though kindly, was but poorly adapted to young persons, seemed to be developing in her with unexpected rapidity, the bud of a childlike simplicity into a prematurely ripe flower.

The precaution had been taken to obtain, for the young girl's education, a Calvinist governess from Geneva; not, however, without sundry objections on the part of the Lutheran clergyman who was, as it were, the confessor and keeper of the conscience of the count's family, and whose influence could not be entirely evaded. This had been done in the hope of thus guarding against either a frivolous Parisian or a bigoted Catholic. But the young woman who had been sent from Geneva proved to be a shallow talker, in whose empty head there was hardly room for a little superficial school-learning, such as was common at the time, joined to a still smaller store of half-digested humanitarian views according to Rousseau. Years had passed, and no opportunity had offered of supplying her place by a better person. As long as the young girl had not become conscious of her own superiority, things went on tolerably. But the more her character developed, the more frequent and bitter became the little skirmishes between teacher and pupil, and again and again the countess was obliged to interfere.

A short time since, however, when, one afternoon, she had unexpectedly entered the room of the govern-

ess, she had found her asleep on the sofa, the "*Chevalier de Faublas*" in her hand, and, on examining the books scattered about on the table, had discovered, among other more harmless novels, the "*Liaisons dangereuses*." This brought matters to a crisis. The placid sleeper found herself awakened in a somewhat abrupt manner, and, in the short conversation which followed, the countess gave her warning. And now she was to leave on the morrow, and her place was not yet filled. For, of such French governesses as were to be found in Stockholm, many a one had come to the country in the capacity of milliner, or better fitted for the duties of a lady's-maid than for educating the young, and only the value placed upon a smattering of their language had raised them to a higher position abroad.

Moreover, the countess had for a long time entertained a favorite idea, and still secretly hoped to carry it out, notwithstanding the opposition of her husband. She urgently desired to send her daughter to Gnadenfrei, in Silesia, or to some other one of the female schools of the Moravian communion, so that she might, under the supervision of the pious brethren and sisters, grow up to be an humble Christian.

She herself had been brought up under the salutary influences of a fervent piety. She felt deeply that, from the seed which her excellent mother had implanted in her heart, had sprung the sheltering palm-tree under whose roof alone she had, in former days, found a sure refuge from the storms and tempests of her youth, and which still afforded her protection and consolation in hours of sorrow. For the fiery and independent spirit of their beloved child, she deemed

the mild rigor of these institutions particularly adapted, in order to ripen it into a true Christian humility. In this way, too, she would withdraw her from the fanatic zeal of the Swedish Church, which had retained all the dogmatic inflexibility of Amsdorf and Flacius, and closed in its narrow path with high walls, between which her beloved, inquiring child already now felt as if in a prison. The religious instruction required by law had commenced some time before, without making any impression on the girl save that of *ennui*. Only, at times, something would strike her as being opposed to what her mother had taught her, when she was a little child, living at her grandfather's in Wil-deneck, when she used to put her to bed herself, and every morning and evening would kneel down with her, and lead her, as it were, into the familiar presence of God and His Son. And now, when such contradictions occurred, she was indefatigable in her inquiries, and harassed her mother with questions, by which the latter felt confused and oppressed. And at such times she would feel almost conscience-stricken for having given that most important matter, the religious instruction of her child, into other hands than her own.

But what choice had she in her position as the wife of her husband? Then she would realize with pain that no one can serve two masters; and the pain was the deeper, as she had to confess to herself that the service of the one, the world, had hardly left her the capacity of conducting such instruction with a perfectly clear conscience.

It was from the influences of this seductive worldly life as well, that the countess desired to withdraw her

daughter, at least until she had reached a more mature age, and an education at Gnadenfrei seemed peculiarly adapted for steeling her against them. Here in Stockholm, so near the agitated scenes of intricate politics, and of the most excited passions, nothing but extreme youth and the barrier of the nursery could protect the daughter of the lord-chamberlain, and of the declared friend and favorite of the queen, from some contact with the intrigues of the world and court.

Therefore, however painful might be the thought of a separation from her darling child, she ardently desired to send her to Gnadenfrei, and had for years been laboring to execute this plan.

But the count her husband, considerate of her wishes though he was in every thing else, was decidedly opposed to this measure. Although he despised the lifeless formalism of the Swedish Church, he found it, after all, less insupportable than the subjectiveness and the devout trifling of Zinzendorf's adherents. If he suffered, indeed in his way even valued, the former in his wife, it was only because he perceived her to be entirely free from the latter. He was only Caritas's step-father, but he was interested in her, and pleased with her sprightliness and the activity of her mind, and, before he had children of his own, had whiled away many an hour with her. Even yet he fully intended to provide like a father for her and her future. His free consent was therefore of the utmost importance to the countess, and she could the less take any independent step with regard to her daughter's education, as her kindred, in whom the young girl might

have found a support, had, on her father's side, become extinct, and, on that of her mother, grown estranged by long separation.

Thus she sat, lost in troubled thought, when, quite unexpectedly, Count Kronhelm, her husband, entered the room. A stranger would sooner have taken the tall, gaunt figure, with its deeply-furrowed cheeks, for the father of the fair Agatha, than for her husband. And yet the count, with his noble bearing, clad in a rich court-dress of satin embroidered with gold, with thickly-powdered wig and *chignon*, was a man of fine presence. In accordance with the custom then prevalent among the higher classes in Sweden, as well as in Germany, he generally spoke French with his wife, although he was quite familiar with German, and she tolerably so with Swedish.

The unexpected visitor entered the room with a polite apology for thus interfering with her toilet. "Pardon this invasion," he said, but, as he looked at her, he stopped, struck with admiration. "*Ma foi*," he continued, "it is quite worth the while to commit a sin, if it be thus rewarded. Have you conjured from the skies the hair of Berenice, to deck yourself therewith, fair Agatha? And do you not fear," he went on, in the bombastic tone of flattery which the period sanctioned, while pointing to a small statue of Minerva that stood on the writing-table, "do you not fear, fairest of the fair, that you may awaken the envy of the goddess, and meet Medusa's fate?"

He lifted the heavy golden veil of hair with an elegant bow, and pressed it reverentially to his lips. Agatha's countenance was covered with deep blushes.



Though she had been married ten years, she yet felt herself in many respects a complete stranger to the count. She smiled rather constrainedly. She took no pleasure in the amorous gallantry of her husband. This foppish manner was not becoming in a man of his age. When she married him, already it had not seemed suitable in him, and although she had brought him a heart full of true affection, fervent gratitude, and perfect esteem, yet she had skilfully contrived to evade as much as possible all tender demonstrations on his part. From the philosopher and man of the world, indeed, she had had but little to suffer in this respect. It was only since he had entered upon the slippery path of the courtier, that he seemed at times to wish thus to recall his youth, as it were.

With a dexterous grasp, Agatha quickly seized the mass of her hair, twisted it skilfully into an artistic knot, copied from the antique, and not from the fashion of the day, and fastened it low at the back of her head with the wide-toothed comb. Then she threw a black-silk mantle over her shoulders, saying:

“Monsieur Truchon keeps me waiting an unwarrantably long time to-day. He knows that we are all his slaves. But, at all events, I must make myself presentable when you grant me the favor of a visit. Quite unexpectedly, too, at this hour, when I generally know you to be with the king.”

“His majesty had a headache, and wished to strengthen himself for the fatigues of this evening by a nap. No wonder that all this trouble makes his head hot. Matters are growing worse and worse.”

"Has any thing new occurred?" asked Agatha, full of interest.

"Nothing of importance. We'll speak of that another time. When his majesty dismissed me, I employed the time in driving to the library and settling a matter concerning which I wished to speak with you. I came home, and heard that you were at your toilet. I proceeded to make mine, meanwhile, in the hope of finding you also ready when I should have finished. But I see," he added, smiling, "that the Graces are not content with a few hours; they lay claim to at least half a day."

"Do not impute this to me," replied the countess, "but to the power of fashion, and of my duties at court, from which I would gladly be released."

"Perhaps," rejoined the count, "your tyrannical Monsieur Truchon will grant me yet a quarter of an hour for speaking to you about a matter which I had intended to submit to you before, only that it seemed best not to trouble you with it until it was decided."

The countess looked at him inquiringly.

He sat down opposite her, was silent a while, cleared his throat, and was evidently somewhat at a loss for a beginning. At length he asked, "How old is Caritas now?"

"She has just turned fourteen," answered her mother, not without surprise.

"And the boys?—Eric?"

"Eight years and three months."

"And Axel?"

"Just fifteen months younger."

"Yes, that will just do. When is the Frenchwoman's time out?"

"To-morrow."

"And have you found another one in her place?"

"By no means, my dear sir," answered the countess, highly astonished. "I have repeatedly complained to you of the difficulty I have had, here in the far North, of finding a suitable person for Caritas's education, among a nation in which frivolity, superficiality, impiety, and immorality, prevail; and which, moreover, lets us foreigners have only what it cannot make use of at home. You are aware, my friend, of my fervent desire to give my beloved child the benefits of a truly pious education, and must remember how often I have entreated you to permit me to send her to Gnadenfrei. God in heaven knows how painful it will be for me to part with her! But what is my maternal tenderness when the salvation of her soul is concerned?"

A slightly-sarcastic smile played around the lips of the count.

But his wife, without noticing it, continued, "The fervor of this wish, my dear husband, gives me the courage to ask you once again for your consent."

"What?" answered the lord-chamberlain, somewhat ironically; "and your two sons, do you not wish to send *them* to Herrnhut or Niesky? What have the poor boys done, that you would leave them on the direct road to hell?"

"Do not misunderstand me intentionally. I do not consider an education in the Moravian communion the *only* road to salvation—merely the *surest*. The boys are too young to be taken from their mother. I have

no doubt that they can find the way to God even here, if we both watch over them with united love and humble prayer."

"As far as the latter is concerned, fair Agatha, I shall depend entirely upon you; you know how much I myself count upon the wide cloak of your prayers and penances, hidden under which you will suffer me, poor sinner that I am, to slip through the gates of heaven. But, joking aside, you may rest assured that your plan for Caritas will never have my consent. And you will thank me for this at some future day. The girl's excellent head shall be filled with other things than pietistic sermons and rhymes about the crowned Lamb. Besides, it is too late. By your giving me the rights of a father over her, Caritas has become a Swede. Here in Sweden she will marry, and it is but right that she should have a Swedish, or rather a cosmopolitan, education, for you know I think but little of these romantic ideas of country and nationality. You can trust me for not letting her grow up in the manner customary to the nobility here—half rustic, half frivolous. She is far too good for a mere house-keeper, or to serve as a means of support for an ignorant Frenchwoman; there you are right."

"And what must we do," asked Agatha, much cast down, "to find the way which you think the proper one?"

"As regards female education," replied the count, "our century has retrograded terribly. The boy, the young savage, should be tamed and softened by the grace of female influence; the girl should be formed by men. Italy, France, the Netherlands, have proved

what women can do. And your country, too, can show names like Mesdames von Löser, and Friesen, and Gersdorf, and whatever else all the *Minervæ Saxoni-cæ*, etc., are called. Only, that with the German ladies there is always a slight tinge of bigotry brought into play. Yes, indeed, you know well what is becoming to you. No man ever likes a female infidel."

"Do you really believe that the spirit of coquetry is introduced even into such holy things?"

The count smiled shrewdly, and continued: "We will discuss that another time, fair Agatha. As for my present argument, you know that Sweden too is not entirely in the shade. Queen Christina is a bright example. But, even nearer our day, we can cite Katharina Baath, and the wife of Antiquary Boenner—"

"What! would you make a learned woman of our little Carry?"

"And why not? If you, for the services of whose toilet the three Graces are ever ready, will, with maternal kindness, lend one or the other of them to her to wash the ink-spots from her fingers with Eau-de-Luce, what will you say when I confess to you that I have already engaged a teacher, that is, a tutor, in place of a governess?"

"You are jesting, my friend."

"By no means. And, like a good, economical householder, I have considered my two boys no less in the matter. We ought long since to have taken Eric away from the training of his old nurse, and her old-fashioned fairy-tales, which you think so poetic. Axel is just at an age to commence his *mensa*, *mensæ*, *mensam*. Your Ingeborg has brought the

little fellows safely through their A B C's and the primer. The Frenchwoman has taught them to rattle off French pretty fluently; it is time now that an able man should take them in hand."

"With regard to the boys, you may be right. But Caritas? Does it seem quite proper to you to intrust the education of a young girl, just entering upon maidenhood, to a strange man? Decorum, it appears to me, propriety—you know that our position at court does not admit of my always being present at her lessons. And if we have no governess in the house—"

The count laughed aloud. "Indeed, I was not prepared for that objection. Do you really take me for a rash youth, who would, without much ado, throw a fair flower of fifteen at the head of a young student, or the like? Make yourself easy; we need have no fear whatever of an Abelard and Héloïse affair. The tutor whom I have engaged for my children, and who will arrive this evening—"

"This evening? To-night, already?"

"This tutor is not in the least dangerous. In the first place, because he is nearly three times as old as our Carry. Secondly, because he has been pretty roughly dealt with by that bane of humanity, the small-pox. Thirdly, because this seducer is one-eyed, and can send forth but a one-sided volley of love-darts with his glances. And, lastly, because this dangerous man, though of an herculean frame, has unfortunately but one arm. You see, from this, that embracing is not exactly in his line, either. What do you say now? Does such an individual still seem

to you to be perilous to the virtue of your daughter?"

"But pray, explain to me—"

"Listen to me, then. For a long time past, when visiting the library, I had noticed a tall, elderly man, who was engaged in the Oriental division in writing, and in the arranging of manuscripts — an athletic figure, a commanding deportment, and his face so dark that I took him for an Asiatic—the drollest contrast to the chalky face and flaxen wig of the librarian. I had never made any particular inquiries concerning him. I only knew that the librarian had brought him from England, where he went last year in search of some Danish documents, and that his diligent labor had put order into the chaos of the Oriental cases, where, until then, every thing had been topsyturvy.

"A few days ago, as I entered the hall, intending to pass a leisure hour there, the librarian accosted me, and asked if I did not know of some place, perhaps as translator in the diplomatic line, for a middle-aged man conversant with a number of languages, and otherwise talented; also a fine mathematician, and thoroughly versed in literature, but very poor, and persecuted by Fate. He had originally studied for some profession, and then served in the Russian, or, for aught I know, the Turkish army; had fallen into captivity, and had acquired the Oriental languages very thoroughly during a long sojourn in the East. He was a German by birth, and accordingly, as it were, a natural vehicle for every kind of erudition. The librarian had made his acquaintance during his

stay in London, where he was earning a scanty living by teaching languages, principally Arabic and Persian. As he himself had felt the Oriental manuscripts of the library to be a great burden—I believe him, for the poor man can't read a word of them—he had made this gentleman an offer to accompany him to Stockholm, where he could put his knowledge of languages to a more profitable use, for a year or two, than in teaching. In an incredibly short time, he had finished his task—by which he had proved, among other things, his honesty and his disinterestedness, for no one could have controlled him in it—and was now again without any means of support. For this reason he, the librarian, felt especially interested in obtaining some position for Mr. Mannsfeld—that is his name. I had him presented to me; for a poor man, of low birth, he has tremendously proud ways, and just for that I liked him. I entered into conversation with him, and he told me that he had lost his left eye in battle, as a Turkish officer; had been captured by the enemy, and taken to Persia. There he fell into the hands of Oriental scholars, and a new world of knowledge was opened to him. But, at last, his innate warlike spirit got the better of him; he entered the Persian service, and went with Shah Nadir's army to India, where he met with another misfortune in losing his arm—an adventurous life, like a tale from the Arabian Nights."

"After so varied experiences," remarked Agatha, whose sympathy for her countryman had been roused by the singularity of his adventures, "one would naturally expect a man to have rude manners. But, if



this were the case with Mr. Mannsfeld, you would not have chosen him to be the tutor of your children, and thus become a member of your family."

"You do me no more than justice. His manners are simple, almost stern, but perfectly refined. Evidently he has grown up in the best society."

"And what finally brought him back to Europe?"

"Doubtless the natural craving of a civilized man for the civilized world, although he will not admit it, for he is eccentric. He is enthusiastic about the East, but in England he found a new hobby. His chief desire, he says, was to acquire a thorough knowledge of the English language, which he had studied in his youth, and spoken a good deal in India. And how do you suppose he went to work? Instead of making use of the more modern English authors, whose taste has been somewhat polished by the influence of French literature, he took the pains of digging up various old poets, whose works abound in barbarisms, although there is no denying that they have some genius. He claims to have discovered a particularly rich mine of all that is beautiful and sublime in one old poet named Shakespeare, who, as you may remember, has already been mentioned by Voltaire, not, however, without severe censure of his frequent want of taste. As I said before, this Mannsfeld is a queer fellow."

"And a German," sighed the countess, thoughtfully, "a countryman of mine! And he is coming to-day, you said?"

"Certainly. When I proposed to him, day before yesterday, to enter my house, as tutor of my children, at a liberal salary, he hesitated. He said he was but

little used to children, and feared that, although he had gone through a university course, he was rather behindhand in his knowledge of the dead languages. But when I told him the age of the boys, and that one of his pupils was a girl, he thought himself that what remained of his philological knowledge would be quite sufficient for an elementary instruction. 'I love young people,' he said; 'but I feel that I receive more from them than I can give them. They illumine the night of my life with their morning light. I can only cast shadows on their sunbeams.' Still, he requested two days for considering the matter. To-day he told me that he was ready to come, but only on condition that he should not be bound, but be free to give up the place at any time, while we too should have perfect liberty to dismiss him whenever it suited us. From this condition alone you can see, my dear countess, that we have no common person to deal with."

At this point the long conversation was interrupted by the final arrival of the hair-dresser. The countess would gladly have sent him away; her heart was very heavy. She longed to be alone. She felt as if she herself were standing at the opening of a new period of her life, since her beloved child was about to enter upon one.

But Queen Ulrica, who far preferred her to all her other ladies, had particularly requested her to be present on this occasion. For she knew herself to be surrounded by secret enemies, and though she was obliged to experience every day that the upper nobility, and especially the wives of the senators, purposely

neglected her, in order to mortify and humiliate her, she was aware that a gala-festival gave double opportunity for such slights. It was therefore important that she should surround herself with a galaxy of rank and beauty from her own party, and both the royal couple and the party of the *Caps*, which at that time sided with the court, could count the lord-chamberlain and his wife among their most faithful adherents.

Moreover, Agatha had for years been accustomed to the constraint of court-life, and, during the eight months which she spent in town, she submitted to it conformably with her duty, as a necessity, only sighing in secret for the brief summer, which permitted her to retire for a while to her peaceful country-seat.

Immediately after Monsieur Truchon, Caritas also appeared, a tall, slender girl, without beauty, but with a sharply-defined face, full of vivacity and intelligence. She brought her mother a French composition, which the countess laid aside, with the remark that she would look it through to-morrow. For, since the discovery which we have mentioned, she herself had taken charge of the young girl's most necessary instruction, in order to keep her away from the governess as much as possible.

Caritas then took up a book, for her mother was in the habit of having her read aloud to her in German while she was being operated upon by the great capillary artist. Thus she succeeded in putting a curb, as it were, upon that inexhaustible talker and scandal-monger, only an admonition as to how madame was to hold her head, or a question as to what

she wished to wear, would now and then interrupt his forced silence.

Caritas perceived at once that her dear mother's thoughts were preoccupied; that she was out of spirits and absent. She looked up stealthily several times, as with girlish voice she read, very seriously, Gellert's "On the Advantages of Discontent," but after a few pages the book sunk from her hand, and she said, with a sigh: "Oh, gracious mamma! how tiresome Gellert is!"

The countess smiled. "Do you not like Gellert's Fables?"

"Yes, they are good enough. I have translated some of them into Swedish for Eric, and in rhymes, mamma, and he likes them. But there's not much in them, after all. The German books are all tiresome, mamma."

"That is judging too hastily, Carry! You have read too few of them. You know we live so far away, I have become a stranger in my own country. In the ten years that have passed since we left it, our language, so rich before, has developed still further. There is said to be a great poet there now, who has written a glorious book—a grand epic poem, that is pronounced superior even to the 'Henriade,' and at any rate has a much sublimer subject, for it celebrates our Saviour."

"Shall we not go to the beautiful mountains of your and my home some day, dear mamma?"

The countess sighed, but did not answer. She always spoke German with Carry. She loved her own language for the sake of the precious one who had first

taught her to love it, and it was particularly on account of his memory that she did not wish the ties between Carry and her native land to be entirely broken. After fifteen years of separation, it was but natural that his image should have withdrawn into the background of her soul. But she considered it as sacred. His features had become transfigured in her memory into those of an ideal hero. The short three months during which she had known him had passed away like a blissful dream. They had been the elevating, soul-expanding poetry of her life, which lay like an oasis amid the desert of the dull, mind-torpidifying prose of her childhood, and the exciting turmoil of her riper years.

She often resolved to solemnly introduce Carry into the shrine of her memories as soon as she should be old enough; she longed for that time to come, for she often felt fearfully alone. But, for the present, Carry was nothing but a child to her.

When M. Truchon had finished, she kissed the girl, and dismissed her. Evening was approaching, and she had to think of the completion of her toilet. After the principal piece of work, the head-dress, had been accomplished, and her dainty feet were encased in gold-embroidered satin slippers, she sat a long time with a silk loose gown thrown around her, making herself entirely ready, hoping that the tutor might arrive before the necessary occupation with her dress would prevent her receiving him.

The position of a tutor, or, as he was often called on the Continent in the middle of the last century, an *informator*, was at that time but little higher in the

eyes of the German nobility than that of a valet. The humble, cringing behavior of the school of Francke, from which the young theologians to whom parents liked to intrust their children were principally chosen, contributed not a little to this. But neither Count Kronhelm nor his wife entertained these views. The teachers of her children were of the highest importance to Agatha, and this one in particular—an unfortunate man, and a countryman of hers too!—but she could wait no longer. She was fully arrayed and her sedan-chair was already at the door, when she was told that Mr. Mannsfeld, the new tutor, had arrived. “Ingeborg will show him his room,” she said, “but I will see him for a moment, at any rate.”

The countess shone in the greatest splendor of her beauty, her rich attire outwardly, and inwardly the agitation of her feelings, which gave double lustre to her eyes, uniting to her advantage. But even without this agitation her cheeks could have dispensed with the artificial color which the custom of the court required. The imperious fashion of the time, of setting off the complexion by the contrast of black beauty-spots, she followed but moderately, and only a single little flying Cupid, hardly large enough to cover a child’s nail of the smallest size, might be noticed between the lower part of the left cheek and the chin, in a hovering attitude, as if about to seek a pleasant refuge in the dimple of the latter. For her noble, daz- zlingly-white forehead, even the mighty structure of thickly-powdered hair did not seem too high, sur- mounted though it was by tall plumes, while strings of costly pearls seemed to restrain the overflowing

wealth of her beautiful hair. A white satin skirt, bordered with silver, fell down upon the glistening shoe-buckles, and only peeped out as a narrow stripe from beneath the heavy overdress of blue and gold brocade, which, falling in ample folds over the wide hoop, was gathered under a deep point in front, and ended behind in a long, stately train. But nothing could be more perfect than the bust of the countess—the slender throat, the sloping shoulders, white as the purest marble, the bosom chastely veiled by lace and gauze. Among the sparkling gems of the necklace there peeped out, in strange contrast, a small black cord, of which the wicked world said that there must be some amulet attached to it, for the countess never left it off, either in court or home dress. None the less perfect were the round, alabaster-like arms, and of them, too, there was no more to be seen than shone through the delicate lace which hung from the elbows, for richly-embroidered gloves covered them up to at least three inches above the wrist, and left only a small strip of the glossy skin visible.

Thus she stood in the centre of the brilliantly-lighted room, when the servant opened the door, and, with the words "Mr. Mannsfeld, your ladyship!" ushered in the stranger.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE INFORMATOR.

A TALL, martial figure stood before her; a man who, though one could see at the first glance that his youth was long past, was quite as evidently still in possession of his full manly vigor. He wore a simple coat of dark-green cloth, buttoned to the throat, without ruffles either at the bosom or the wrists. A black military stock matched the stern simplicity of his whole appearance. In the black-silk sling which hung from his right shoulder, there rested a mutilated arm. His complexion was so dark that the ravages which the small-pox had made upon his skin were hardly apparent. His hair, thick and black, was plentifully mixed with white threads. A broad scar, evidently of long standing, extended across the high, arched forehead, over the aquiline nose, to the left eye, which was covered with a black patch. The extreme thinness of the face gave a certain sharpness to its forms. There was a great deal of depth and character, but at the same time an indescribable melancholy in these features, upon which the storms of life had left indelible traces.

"Madame has commanded," he said, in French, with a low bow.



The countess answered him in German: "I am glad, my dear sir," she said, in the sweetest tones of her voice, "to see you in my house, and all the more so, as I welcome in you a countryman. I regret exceedingly," she continued, perceiving that he regarded her with bewilderment, "that I can see you but for a moment to-day. The tutor of my children is for me a person of so much importance, that I would gladly remain at home, if it were only a matter of sacrificing a pleasure; but my duty calls me. I am obliged to go to court."

As she spoke, she noticed, not without embarrassment, that the stranger stared at her wildly; indeed, it even appeared to her as if his look were fixed upon her with terror. She paused, in the expectation of a reply from him. But she merely saw him open his lips twice, yet no sound reached her ear, while every vestige of color left his cheeks; it seemed as if the gray face of a corpse were gazing upon her.

Suddenly he advanced a step; his tall form tottered. He seized the back of a chair, and supported himself by it.

"Excuse me, madame," he said, with shaking voice, "I am ill. It is the language of my home—it must be the surprise of hearing my own language again after so many years, which unmans me so—I did not know—"

"Be seated, sir," she said, with compassionate kindness, "how your surprise touches me!"

He sank down upon the chair which she pushed toward him, and covered his face with his hand.

"So you were not aware that you would find a

German in me? Oh, I can well understand your being surprised and startled. Our native land always remains dear to us!—And is it so long since— Do you feel faint? Pray drink some water.”

Full of heart-felt sympathy, she came close to him, and offered him a glass of water. He looked at her again, ghastly pale, with bloodless lips. There was insanity in that look.

Terrified, she stepped back. Involuntarily she raised her hand to grasp the small bell which stood upon the table.

It was probably this movement which gave the unhappy man sufficient force to recover himself. He rose, and, though his face was still deathly pale, he said, hurriedly: “Grant me forgiveness, madame, for this unfortunate introduction. I ought never to have left my cell. It was your language, yes, it must have been your language, which called up, with fearful power from the dark night of my past, one of the most heart-rending memories of my unhappy life, and nearly robbed me of my senses. I am ashamed of my weakness.”

“By no means, my dear Mr. Mannsfeld. Why should you be ashamed of being ill, of being unfortunate? Would that you might find, in my house, the rest you need!—that it might become the haven of your tempest-tossed life!”

He stood before her erect, firm, pale, with downcast look, hardly hearing what she said, listening only to the tone of her voice.

“Now,” she continued, “you need rest above all things. To-morrow I will present my children to you.

For to-night I can provide you only with the most necessary comforts, as your arrival was a surprise to me too. To-morrow I will make better arrangements."

She rang the bell, and, as Ingeborg entered, recommended the stranger to her special care. "The gentleman is unwell," she said; "be sure that he has some good tea, and that his room is not too warm. —Good-night, my dear sir! I shall see you again in the morning. I trust you will sleep well; you are among friends, and God is everywhere, you know."

When she was alone, she said to herself: "What a strange scene! I am inexpressibly sorry for the poor man! And yet he does not look as if he would like to be an object of pity. It is a horrible idea, but I cannot help thinking that the wretched man must have been out of his mind at some time. His look was fearful! And still his eye is beautiful, it is full of soul. When he became more composed, that eye looked at me as from another world."

But the countess had no time for giving way to her thoughts. The sedan-chairs were waiting, it was late. The divisions at court, over which etiquette and the manners of society cast but a thin veil, soon laid claim to all her interest and all her sympathy for the grievously-injured royal couple.

During the past winter the parties had taken the occasion of these assemblies to exhibit their mutual feeling in its full force. The wives of the senators, Counts Scheffer and Höpner, had been refused the entry into the inner court of the palace, for their carriages, as they drove to a gala-festival. Not without

reason, this measure had been attributed to the influence of the queen, who saw in the claim to this right, until then reserved for the royal house alone, an invasion of the privileges of the latter. The injured pride of the two ladies had its echo the next morning in the stormy transactions of the senate. The colonel of the guard was cited, declared the matter to have been a mistake, and, on the demand of the offended magnates, caused the sergeant, who had acted by royal order, to be arrested.

But this at length put an end to the endurance of the weak king. Still smarting, as it were, under the bitter humiliations to which he and his wife had only recently been forced to submit, he now showed the senate and estates that, at least in his own house, he intended still to be master. The sergeant had to be released, and the gates of the inner court remained closed.

But the queen could only half enjoy this rare victory. The court assemblies did not seem to succeed that whole winter. The ladies of the *Hats* among the senators, and all who were under their influence, withdrew on the most trivial grounds, and the manner of the ladies of the *Caps* showed that they felt their own honor attainted in that of their enemies.

To-night it was, at the first opening assembly of the present winter, that an attempt, initiated by mediating courtiers and various conciliatory measures, was to be made to clear the atmosphere. But Agatha, as soon as she entered the room, felt the heaviness of the air and the coming storm. Women of the higher classes possess an unfortunate art of showing,

without words or any direct violation of propriety, a certain contempt, a certain disdain. The how and the what of it can hardly be defined in words.

The queen entered the room, leaning on the king's arm, and, as she was in the habit of doing, went the rounds among the ladies, before seating herself at the card-table, addressing, with forced affability to-night, a gracious word to each one. But Agatha noticed how the venomous looks which measured her on one side, the lurking eyes which observed her on the other, drove the hot blood more and more into her cheeks, until gradually her features showed a feverish irritation, and her eye darkened.

When she reached Agatha, she suddenly, against her custom, commenced speaking German to her in a loud voice. For, although she did not mutilate her native tongue to the degree that her brother, the great Frederick, did; yet, like all princesses of the time, she spoke French much more fluently, and had never previously used any other language with Agatha. But now her object was to punish the proud Countess Fersen, who understood no German, for her overbearing demeanor. After she had for some minutes, with intentional familiarity, questioned Agatha on indifferent subjects, and listened absently to her answers, while the rouged cheeks of the Countess Fersen burned with rage, and her whole face became purple, she merely passed the latter with the remark, "*Ah, comtesse, comme vous êtes échauffée !*" and then addressed some gracious words to the next lady. But Agatha felt how painfully the poor queen suffered from this comedy. Later, as she watched her at the card-table, where she

sat at *l'hombre*, with the French and Russian ministers, and, with a constrained smile, was dealing the cards, she thought she could distinctly see her force back her tears, and heard her complaining that another bad cold was coming upon her, which caused her eyes to swell and water, and how subject every one was to colds in the raw climate of Sweden.

Amid such annoyances the evening passed. The countess came home late, discussed with her husband every thing she had noticed, whereupon he communicated to her the result of his own observations; until, at last tired out, she went to rest without bestowing another thought on the poor tutor.

She soon sunk into a deep, sound sleep. A sweet dream removed her for some hours from the perplexing present. It carried her back to her happy, guileless youth, to the most blissful period of her life, the year of her first love and marriage. With a reality that seemed tangible, her venerable parents stood before her, laying their hands in blessing upon the myrtle-wreathed head of her who knelt at their feet. She heard the church-bells, whose familiar sound summoned her to the most solemn act of her life. With vivid, clear distinctness, she beheld once more, for the first time in many years, the form of the adored one whom, as she thought, God had destined to be her guide through life. She felt the pressure of his hand, the beam of his eye warmed her soul. She heard the voice of the servant of God, who bound her existence to his in sacred irrevocability. When already half-awake, she still lay for a long time wrapped in the after-feeling of a dreamy happiness. It was only

when Ingeborg entered, partially opened the shutters, and then softly drew back the curtains of the bed, that she entirely recovered herself.

She sighed deeply, heavily.

"O Ingeborg," she said, "is it you? I have had such a strange dream! Can it be possible that all that is over, long, long ago? Nothing but the golden clouds of a rosy morn!—But no matter," she continued, raising herself, "no matter! The day has its claims.—Tell me, how fares the poor tutor? Did he recover soon? Was he no worse?"

Ingeborg shook her head dubiously. "I am afraid monsieur the count will find he's made a bad job of it with that gentleman."

"How so? did he sleep so badly?"

"He sleep, indeed! He has not touched his bed; all night long he marched up and down the room. David sleeps just under him. He had the toothache, and lay awake, and he says he heard him walking about all night. Then he threw open all the windows, and early this morning he went off, and no one has seen him since. When I took up his coffee, at eight o'clock, I knocked for a long time, but all in vain. The bird had flown. The cage was empty."

"Very strange!" said the countess, and the alarming idea that her husband had involved himself with an insane person again presented itself to her mind.

"But meanwhile," continued Ingeborg, "his things arrived last night—a little trunk, no larger than the box in which Jean keeps monsieur the count's new wig. David and Sven made all kinds of foolish jokes about it when they carried the little thing, that was as light

as a feather, up-stairs. David, who is all the time peeping into the young count's school-books, wanted to show his learning, and said: 'Here's the genuine King Cræsus come to the house. Won't he spend his money! There'll be a perfect shower of ducats. I know that by the weight of the trunk.'"

"And if," replied the countess, with dignity, "these valets measure the worth of a man by the presents they hope to receive from him, how does it happen that you, Ingeborg, communicate their talk to me?"

"Your ladyship will excuse me," answered the woman, reddening; "your ladyship knows that I am no tattler; but I thought, in my ignorance, that it would be better that madame should know all that may be said about the strange gentleman before she trusted him with her best treasures."

"You are right, Ingeborg; but my husband, who is an excellent judge of human nature, and knows a thousand times more about the world than you or I, has sufficiently examined the new tutor. A man's being poor or rich does not lower or increase his worth. Mr. Mannsfeld has come here from distant countries. Great travellers never burden themselves with much baggage. He had no intention of remaining in Sweden, and is only on travelling-footing. You will oblige me by explaining this to the servants."

At breakfast the countess related to her husband the singular manner in which his *protégé* had introduced himself the evening before; and how, after a night without rest, he had disappeared again. The count was evidently unpleasantly impressed; but aside



from his rarely being willing to admit that he had made a mistake, he had also long since adopted the *nil admirari* of the ancient philosophers as one of his principles. He understood every thing, could explain every thing, and was much given to dogmatizing.

"It is not to be wondered at," he said, "that a man who has spent many years of his life under circumstances which have entirely estranged him from refined society, should feel dismayed at suddenly finding himself in the presence of a beautiful woman of high station. Besides, you were in your most brilliant attire, and it cannot be doubted that philosophy alone can make us insensible to brilliancy and splendor. The rude human being, or what in this case amounts to the same thing, the human being disused to higher civilization, is impressed by them. Only think of the imposing effect of the ceremonies of the Catholic Church upon the masses."

The countess did not exactly see the force of the argument. She smiled incredulously.

"And how do you explain his sudden disappearance this morning?"

"Why, I told you he was an original sort of Rousseau, whom your charms will gradually tame. Of course, he is ashamed of his childish behavior. If he were tractable, humble, submissive, he would try to excuse his awkwardness; but he is too proud, too stubborn, for that. He runs away to save himself this fancied humiliation. A true Rousseau! I should not be surprised if he did not come back at all, and then, *ma chère*, we will take no further notice of him."

These last words showed but too plainly that the

count was vexed at the conduct of his *protégé*. He turned the conversation upon the entangled affairs of the court; and the countess took good care not to mention poor Mannsfeld again. About noon the count received a letter from the latter, in which he endeavored, in the politest yet at the same time most dignified terms, to excuse his improper behavior by giving as its cause an attack of sudden physical pain to which he was subject occasionally.

"Your excellency knows," he added, "that it was your generous encouragement which made me presume once more to venture into a world from which I have become entirely estranged. Your kindness will grant me one more day of entire solitude, and, in case you pardon me yourself, will obtain for me the pardon of the countess; to-morrow I shall have the honor of presenting myself to you, ready for the fulfilment of my duties. And it will only depend upon you to decide whether you still think me worthy of entering upon them."

The count, who saw in this letter a confirmation of his remarks, was therefore all the more willing to forgive this singular character, who had lived too long exclusively for himself, to possess that degree of self-control which only philosophy and intercourse with his fellow-men could give. Agatha was silent, but her husband's resolve to intrust the education of their children to a man who lacked this self-control, surprised her. She soon saw, however, that her anxiety was needless.

The next morning the tutor really made his appearance; and Agatha hardly recognized in the cold,

calm mien of the stranger her guest of the other evening. Every trace of the piquant significance of his haggard face had vanished. His cheeks were still more hollow and furrowed than before. It seemed as if he had grown several years older during the last two nights. His look was almost sullen. He did not repeat his excuses, but merely asked whether the count still desired his services. While the latter explained to him his system of education, which, like all the count's wisdom, was based upon the shallow philosophy of the Encyclopedists, he listened to him with cold politeness, and without answering a word. After the other had finished, he answered: "Your excellency knows very well that man is *educated* at home and in the world. I have only agreed to *teach* your children, and that I will do according to my honest judgment and to the best of my ability."

The countess had no system of education to recommend, for she had formed none, except that she felt that religion ought to be the foundation; but her long companionship with her husband, a freethinker, had made her reserved in speaking on such subjects with strangers, particularly when, as in this case, she believed she had grounds for suspicion. After the count had left, she merely said: "I, too, dear Mr. Mannsfeld, should like to impress upon you something concerning the management of my children; but, unlearned as I am myself, there can be no question of a system of education. There is but one wish which I would express to you, and that is, that you might *love* my children."

She expected an answer, but he sat silent and stiff before her, his eye turned on the ground.

"I will call the children now," she said at last, rising. She dreaded the meeting. "What impression will this sombre recluse, this stiff, cold misanthrope make upon those young creatures so brimful of love? It seems to me as if I were about to throw ice and snow upon my tender buds."

But the introduction, for which the children were already prepared, passed off much better than she had feared. The little boys, indeed, looked up somewhat abashed at the stranger with the proud martial bearing; but their fancy had already connected the man from the far East, who was to be their tutor, with the tales of the Arabian Nights, from which their governess had taught them French, and they were quite prepared to find their new tutor an extraordinary person.

But particularly with Caritas the acquaintance began in the most favorable manner. The young girl had heard with delight that, by her step-father's desire, she was to receive a liberal education, and be taught like a boy. As she turned upon the stranger her clear, honest, intelligent eyes, and gave him her hand in greeting, it seemed as if an electric spark ran through him. He retained her hand, and asked, in a low, hardly-audible voice: "What is your name, mademoiselle?"

"Caritas," she replied, "Caritas von Hohenhorst." And, as a slight start on the part of the stranger seemed to indicate that he was surprised at her not bearing the name of Kronhelm, she added: "Count Kronhelm is only my step-father, but he is very good to me. My mamma says I ought to love him as if he were my own father."

Mannsfeld dropped her hand. "That is right," he said, emphatically.

The instruction of the children commenced the same day, and Agatha soon convinced herself that her fears had been unfounded. For, not a week had passed before she saw the boys attached, heart and soul, to their new tutor, who directed their games as well as their studies, and was as much at home in chivalrous exercises as in the sciences. His requirements seemed often almost beyond their years; but the narration of a personal Oriental adventure, the description of a caravan, a lion-hunt, or the like, was the stimulus and the reward of their exertions. But for Caritas especially a new life had commenced. She studied with enthusiastic ardor, and her whole manner brightened, her serious look became more cheerful, as gradually the curtain of an unknown but long-desired, long-yearned-for world rose before her.

The esteem of the count, too, for his singular *protégé*, was evidently heightened on nearer acquaintance, which, however, did not progress rapidly. For, much occupied as he was at court and by political affairs, he did not see much of the tutor, although in the beginning he observed him closely in secret. He had ascertained from the librarian that, on the morning on which Mannsfeld had left his house so unceremoniously, he had come to the library in such a state of excitement that he had appeared like an entirely different person—not a trace of that stoic calm which he had probably artificially acquired in the East. He had declared that he had been too precipitate in giving the count his promise; the state of

his health rendered him incapable of again appearing in the world; he was a ruin, a cripple; he was decidedly unfit for any intercourse with women, to whom the sight of him must be disgusting; he hated women, he hated the world—and other similar expressions, incoherently uttered in anger and bitterness. Mingled with them were inquiries about the count's family circumstances; while formerly nothing had seemed to interest him but his literary labors, he had now, all at once, wanted to know every thing. How it was that he had subsequently concluded to come, after all, the librarian could not tell; for that his own persuasions had been of no avail, he himself acknowledged.

Whenever Count Kronhelm's engagements admitted, he liked to converse with Mr. Mannsfeld, for, although his tone, as far as the manners of society allowed, was always politely instructive, yet he readily perceived that he too could learn something from this man, who, though younger than he, was even a greater traveller, and evidently a thinker. And, in spite of his tone, the count still liked to learn, and, with all his self-sufficiency, could bear contradiction.

And Agatha enjoyed listening to the conversation of the two, for, as they never had the same ideas upon any subject, but always expressed different views, she had the advantage of hearing a question discussed from two sides, and could decide it for herself. But, if she ever joined in the conversation, she could be certain that Mr. Mannsfeld, apparently with diffident respect, would withdraw from it. "He is a misogynist," the count would say, "perhaps in consequence of bitter experience; it may be, too, because he feels

that he has no longer the power to please women. And thus only could the countess explain his shy, reserved manner toward her, which all her winning kindness and cordiality could not overcome; and the insupportable abruptness of which, indeed, seemed rather to increase than diminish with time. When she expressed her annoyance at this to her husband, he would laugh, and say: "You know, fair Agatha, that Nature has given many a miserable little worm its sting; what else has the poor man to defend himself against your charms?" or, "You must remember that the unfortunate man has but one eye, and therefore can only half see your beauty;" or he would ward off her complaint with some other courteous joke of the kind.

But Agatha felt this peculiar situation with some bitterness. It was a matter of still greater irritation to her, however, that in this way, little by little, she lost the influence over her children's education which she considered her maternal prerogative. The ancient languages, as well as the mathematical studies, she was not familiar with; she could not, therefore, pretend to any interference with Mr. Mannsfeld's instruction. But she claimed her share, not only in the moral culture of her children, but also in their mental development, and from that he excluded her, without any apparent intention, in an unaccountable manner.

Unfortunately, the poor countess had at the moment but little time to counteract this unnatural estrangement. For, at court, the tangled threads seemed to grow more and more knotted. The queen required consolation and encouragement, and with the Countess

Kronhelm, by birth the subject of her beloved brother, she hoped just now to find more sympathy than with any of her Swedish ladies. The net, which the vengeance of the deeply-injured empress-queen, Maria Theresa, had gradually woven around the apparently-sleeping lion, was contracting more and more. Nearly all the smaller states of Germany, France, and Russia, had combined their intrigues against him, and to secure Sweden, through the influence of the *Hats*, was now the pressing question. Already the king, worked upon this time in unison by the hirelings of France and Russia, was half won over; the queen, but feebly supported by a portion of the *Caps*, worked indefatigably in opposition. Irritated by a thousand vexations and annoyances, an hour of confidence, in which she could pour out her heart and abuse her adversaries, did her good. Agatha, although she looked upon the great king as her own worst enemy whose severity and unjust anger had robbed her young life of its best happiness, was yet generous enough to sympathize with the queen. Moreover, she had been fully instructed by her husband as to the folly and wickedness of any participation of Sweden in this war. She therefore magnanimously crowded her own troubles into the background of her soul, and only looked forward with increased longing to the summer, when she would once more be mistress of her time. For, during the short fine season which the far North grants, she was accustomed, as has already been mentioned, to retire with her children to a quiet country-seat on the southern shore of Suedermannland, while her husband, as lord-chamberlain, was obliged to follow the court to the different royal



villas and hunting-seats. Here, for the château lay isolated and far from any neighbors, she could live entirely at her leisure and for her children, while the count only visited her now and then, always sure of a cordial reception from his beautiful wife. "Only a few months yet," she would say to herself, "and that happy time will be here again. Then I shall reconquer the lost field, and I shall venture every thing to overcome the strange foe who threatens to supplant me in the hearts of my children."

## CHAPTER III.

### FOURTEEN YEARS AGO.

To render Agatha's position intelligible to the reader, I must take him back fourteen long years.

The momentous night of December, which in 1741 was to prepare a new change of rulers for the Russian people, had already spread its raw, foggy darkness over the imperial city of the North, when, in one of the spacious antechambers of the Winter Palace, a young officer was pacing to and fro, lost in thought.

He was expecting the courier who, at midnight, was to start for Germany, to carry thither the letters of the imperial highnesses. For, a hundred and twenty years ago, the common mail travelled but slowly, and high personages and those dependent on them gladly availed themselves of the government couriers for their private affairs as well.

The regent, Anna of Mecklenburg, once convinced that she had no longer any thing to fear from the vengeance of General Münnich, whom she had rewarded with ingratitude, and the dread of whom had led her and her weak-minded husband to change their sleeping-apartment every night during the previous spring,

had passed the summer in brainless, loitering security. Completely estranged from her husband, whom she had long despised, given to criminal, amorous pleasures, avoiding every energetic act from physical as well as mental indolence, she paid no attention to the warnings of those whose interests were interwoven with her own. Before Münnich, the enraged lion, she had trembled; the idea of trembling before her cousin Elizabeth, a weak, sensual woman like herself, was too new to her to find easy access into her stubborn head, which could only harbor its accustomed round of empty thoughts.

Had she not seen her, ousted as she had been, occupying, from her youth upward, quite an inferior position under her aunt, the Empress Anna? And did she not know of her being too much absorbed in love-intrigues to think much about the throne?

And on this day particularly the regent believed herself perfectly secure. Warned most urgently by a secret letter, had she not, leaving the card-table and beckoning the czarevna to join her in her boudoir, herself called her to account? And had not the princess, on her loading her with reproaches, assured her of her innocence with many tears, and sworn, by all that was sacred, that she knew nothing of secret plans? Therefore, when even her husband, on retiring, had expressed some concern, and thought it advisable to have L'Estocq, the confidant of the princess, arrested, and cause sentinels to be stationed at certain posts, she would not listen to him, and easily quieted the weak duke, by describing to him the scene she had just had with the czarevna.

And yet she herself was often not free from the

inner consciousness of an approaching danger—particularly when some bad dream had disturbed her, or some slight circumstance occurred, which, according to the wide range of superstition common to the Russian women of the time, could be looked upon as an evil omen. And if it were to be, what could she do against it? she would ask, with the entire resignation of a true Slavic-Oriental fatalism. On one occasion she accidentally stepped upon Elizabeth's dress, entangled her feet in its train, and fell to the ground before the princess. "Mark my words," she said, with a sigh, to her confidante, "I shall yet be forced to humble myself before that Elizabeth!" And then she would picture, with gloomy loquaciousness, how she should behave as an unfortunate princess. But she had neither energy nor shrewdness enough to take the first step toward averting such a fate from herself.

With Duke Anton Ulrich, her husband, she was for the moment once more on tolerably good terms. During the temporary absence of her lover, the handsome Count Lynar, after having secured him for the future by a convenient contrivance, her apartment was again open to the easily-conciliated duke. In the adjoining room the imperial prince slept with his nurse; the third was occupied by the little Princess Catharine, her wet-nurse, and the lady who had charge of the grand-ducal children, Juliana von Mengden.

These three apartments all opened upon the ante-room in which the above-mentioned young officer was on guard. In the passage outside the room, a sentinel

of the same regiment was pacing to and fro. Besides the latter, numerous sentinels were stationed at the outer entrances of the palace, and the regular guard-room at the main entrance was filled with soldiers.

The officer in question was a German, and his name was Moritz von Hohenhorst. It was hardly two weeks since he had entered the imperial service; little more than a month since he had arrived in the northern capital, a despairing fugitive, nearly destitute, torn from a beloved young wife, having barely escaped a dishonorable death—he, one of the conquerors of Glogau, one of the victors at Mollwitz! In a moment of wrongfully-irritated passion, he had lifted his hand against his superior. In avenging his *honor*, the unhappy man had forever closed against himself the path of *fame* in his native land.

Death alone could expiate so heavy an offence against discipline, aggravated as it was by the circumstance of its having been committed in the midst of war.

The grateful affection of one of his subalterns had saved him. He had escaped by a miracle. But the thorn was still in his heart, and had not lost its sting.

Moritz von Hohenhorst was a native of Brunswick. Though several years younger than Duke Anton Ulrich, he had been his playmate in childhood, whenever he spent his vacation at the house of his uncle, who held one of the high charges at the court of Brunswick. The duke, who, as coregent, had been named by his wife generalissimo of the imperial army, received him kindly, perhaps the more so, as Hohenhorst had incurred a penalty under his brother-in-law,

the King of Prussia, whom he hated. When his former playmate presented himself to him, he had inquired most particularly into all details. He wished to know all about his unfortunate affair, and those who could have seen the two in conversation without knowing them, would much sooner have taken the handsome, heroic-looking youth for the prince by birth, and the little man with the thin legs and the flat face for the humble applicant. Anton Ulrich was a gracious sovereign, and was delighted, besides, at the acquisition of so splendid an officer, and one of the heroes of Silesia to boot, for his body-guard. He immediately caused a major's commission to be made out for the former Prussian captain.

He continued, too, to treat him most graciously, and among other things had himself introduced him, on the day previous, to Major von Winterfeld, who was in St. Petersburg as Prussian envoy, as a former Prussian officer. Moritz had not heard a word from Germany since his nocturnal flight. He colored, as he recognized the envoy, whom he had formerly met in society in Berlin. The ambassador's face, too, was slightly tinged with red, when he heard the name of Baron Hohenhorst.

The diplomat gave no sign of recognition. After a short, embarrassed pause, he said in French: "You had a cousin of your name in the service of my king, baron, who has recently met with a great misfortune. I have just received the news that his majesty has resolved to punish his imprudence, for which the court-martial had sentenced him to death, with peculiar severity, because an offence against discipline is the

most dangerous of crimes. Your cousin has been cashiered and deprived of his title."

Moritz stood as if thunderstruck. A deathly pallor spread over his face. The diplomat turned away, apparently quite at ease, and commenced a new conversation with a neighbor. The duke, who, meanwhile, had been talking to some one else, but had half-listened to the envoy, patted the young German kindly on the shoulder, when he saw his agitation.

"Be of good courage, Hohenhorst," he said. "I'll send you to the army in Sweden. There are laurels to be won in Finland as well as in Silesia. You can wipe out the stain there."

On this night, too, the prince had again shown himself gracious and full of interest toward the young officer. When, before retiring, he handed him the letters which he had written to Brunswick and Berlin, with the order to give them to the *chasseur*, and observed the expression of gloomy melancholy with which the other received them, he said: "The package is still unsealed; if you care to report to your lady how you are faring, you can do so. The courier will send the letter by mail from Berlin, and thus it will go safely. He will not leave before midnight. The grand-duchess intended to write to her august father, but she grew tired, and has deferred it till another time. I'll go to bed too, so as not to keep her awake. Her sleep is troubled enough nowadays, as it is."

Rejoiced at being able at last to transmit safely to his beloved wife any certain intelligence of himself, Moritz had, with fervent thanks, availed himself of

the prince's permission, and, frequently interrupted by overwhelming grief, and tears which he tried in vain to repress, had written the following letter :

“Fondly-beloved wife, soul of my existence !

“God grant that you have safely received the hasty lines which I sent you by mail from Kalisch, the first place where I ventured to take breath. They will at least have convinced you of my having passed the frontier in safety.

“I ask myself whether it is not a dream, that I am sitting here, in barbarian Scythia, hundreds of miles away from you and my happiness, inditing a letter to you like a stranger ? I, hardly a month ago the happiest of men, envied by all, thanking God daily, hourly, for having given me *you*, my highest good, my all in all, for my own ! And now divided from you so hopelessly, my life's happiness so irrecoverably lost !

“And what is it that I have done ? How blackly my enemies will have painted me to you and to your highly-revered parents, my gracious benefactors ! You, my beloved, will not listen to these calumnies—but they ?

“And I ask again, what is it that I have done ? Because I listened to the voice of humanity, I am treated inhumanly ; because I defended my honor, I am dishonored. I—of what account am I ? The Almighty will take care of me. He has already stretched out to me His helping hand. But the thought that I have caused you, the daughter of a noble race, to become the wife of a degraded man, bereft of his title ; that I have drawn you, saint that you are, into the



turmoil of human and diabolic passions—this is what I cannot realize—what, in dark hours, has almost driven me to despair.

“How far you condescended, Agatha—you, a maiden of princely race—in giving your hand to a simple nobleman, an officer of inferior rank—that I knew, and acknowledged deeply. But I was bold enough to cherish the hope that, on the path of glory upon which I had entered in the service of an adored king, I might lead you back to the height from which you had descended from love of me. And now all is over! One moment, and the proud dream has faded!

“And yet I am not guilty before God. As a cavalier, I could not do otherwise. Let me tell you how it all came:

“You did not know, for I would not wound your delicacy by mentioning it to you, how envy and jealousy had long been inciting that miserable fellow Von Nastitz, who in former days had also aspired to you, to annoy and wound me, and how, until lately, he only had not *dared* to insult me openly. When, after the storming of Glogau, at which he had committed a grave military error, he received from the hereditary prince, our general, a severe reprimand at the same moment in which the latter praised me beyond my deserts; when, after the battle of Mollwitz, the favor of my king bestowed upon me a promotion in rank, his malignant hatred increased more and more. And this latter event placed me in a bad position, for he was major of the battalion in which I received a company. He was full of devices for pricking me with needles, as it were, which was infinitely harder to bear

than open sword-cuts, for I could neither return nor take notice of the stings thus inflicted.

“But the worst was still to come. This shameless fellow, who in point of years could have been your father, and who had behind him a dissolute, licentious youth, solicited your hand, trusting to the influence of his wealth for success. That it was upon me, instead of him, that your venerated parents bestowed their favor, that I obtained that which was denied to him, this filled the measure of his rage against me. And the villain soon discovered my most vulnerable point. During drill on parade, or wherever else an opportunity offered of maltreating the men of my company, loading them with unmerited coarse censure, having them locked up, dictating floggings or other punishments, carrying to inhumanity the strict, rigid discipline of military order—every thing was done to irritate, to exasperate me, and nothing but an almost convulsive restraining of my just inward wrath could protect me even from open censure; there was no lack of secret, concealed rebukes.

“And now to that dreadful day of the outbreak. You angel, with your saintly heart, will scarcely understand it. He had stung me more savagely than ever. There was a man in my company who was particularly attached to me—an honest, faithful soul, who had first roused my interest by the filial-love with which he clung to his old mother, who had followed him from their home. He was from Lusatia, and had entered the army but shortly before we invaded Silesia, for nothing but pure love of a soldier’s life, of which the poor fellow had probably formed a

romantic idea; for he was the son of respectable parents. As his mother was a widow, he was under the special care of a pious godfather, a worthy wagoner, whom his business brought to Ranschwitz from time to time.

"The honest man had long endeavored in vain to withdraw his Martin from the army again. Finding he could not succeed, he came to me one day, and charged me, in such touchingly simple words, to look after the lad and the good of his soul, that I have watched over him since, as if I had been his father. And it was this poor fellow, who, just because he was new, committed many mistakes, whom my enemy had chosen in particular for the purpose of wounding me.

"On that unhappy day, just before parade, he passed down the front, pouring forth oaths and abuses. Martin might not have been holding his head very straight, when the major gave him such a blow under the chin, that the blood spurted from the poor fellow's nose. A few drops fell upon his white breeches. When Nastitz, returning, saw this, he became furious, broke out in savage cursing at 'such nastiness,' pushed the lad out of the ranks, and ordered thirty blows to be counted out to him!

"I could contain myself no longer. I stepped forward and excused the man, giving an explanation of the matter. Nastitz, with a sneer, commanded me to be silent. What he added, mumbling it in his beard, I could not well understand, and the trumpets sounded just then, and the cavalry came up, but I heard plainly something about fellows in uniform that were born to be black-coats. The three officers stepped

forward and surrounded me. The parade commenced; I did my duty mechanically; inwardly I was boiling with indignation. At last the parade was over. The regiments marched off; the officers were standing about in groups. I stepped up to the major, who was in conversation with several other officers. I called upon him to take back his words, or to declare that I had misunderstood him. 'And what did *monsieur le capitaine* understand?' he asked, with a diabolical smile. 'I should dishonor my lips by repeating it,' I replied; 'but, whatever it was, there is but one way of answering it!' Then the whole foaming venom that was in the man came out! 'Would not *monsieur le capitaine* wish first to consult with his pious mamma-in-law upon the matter?' And, when I involuntarily put my hand to my sword, he added to these shameless, sneering words, a few more expressions so filthy that I will not pollute your pure eye by transcribing them.

"Then I felt that the scoundrel was not worthy of my good sword. He deserved nothing but the degrading blow in the face which I gave him. He rushed upon me furiously; I drew my sword to defend myself against his returning the blow. As he lifted his arm, it struck the edge of my blade. All closed in around me. 'He has lost his senses!' cried one. 'Command yourself!' said another. Before I could think, the superiority of numbers had disarmed me, and I had been arrested.

"I was taken to the old stone house, which you know from my having shown it to you in passing, and which had served the regiments that were in camp

there as a guard-house, and also as a lock-up for those under arrest. It was formerly a tavern, and had been taken from the landlord for a compensation, as being too near the camp. I was shut up in a large back room, bare of furniture. The front room was the guard-room; both were on the ground floor, but the shutters of the back room were closed, and only a few gleams of light fell through the chinks, which were darkened at regular intervals by the sentinel walking to and fro outside.

“I will not describe to you the state I was in, my Agatha. My first senseless rage was soon over, for your image finally drove away all other thoughts, all feelings of anger and of revenge. Years of confinement in a fortress lay before me, years of separation from you; a youth of idleness, devoid of deeds. Athwart the prison-walls I would hear from afar the war-trumpets, the songs of victory and triumph of my hero-king, while I was wasting my noblest powers in forced indolence.

“The day passed in despairing reflections of this kind. The room, obscured from the first by the closed shutters, had grown quite dark. At length the door opened. A private entered with a lamp and my supper. By the bed stood a table and a single chair, upon which I had thrown myself, after long pacing to and fro restlessly. The door remained half-open; just as the sentinel outside passed it, the private placed the lamp and the dish upon the table, and whispered, without looking up: ‘Look behind the stove—in the night!’ He turned, and left the room. The door closed, and the key was turned.

“‘Behind the stove?’ I took the lamp and looked. nothing was to be seen there but a sack of straw, which had evidently been placed there by some prisoner who wanted to sleep warm. I felt of it in different places, and touched something hard beneath it. I lifted the sack, and discovered an iron ring let into the floor. I turned it; an opening appeared. It was a trap-door, from which a small flight of stairs led, as it seemed, into a cellar.

“The idea of flight entered my mind for the first time. From Poland, from Russia, from England, I could appeal by letter, through influential friends, to the elemency of my king, who favored me personally. With this hope, at least, I flattered myself. In a fortress I should be like one dead. In short, the yearning for liberty conquered. But I was not to escape till the night. I could hardly restrain my impatience. The floor seemed to burn beneath me. And yet it was well that I waited; for, at ten o’clock, my door was opened once more, some one looked in, to see that all was safe, the key was turned, and a large bolt drawn outside. My resolution to escape became firmly fixed, as these arrangements pictured to me what my future would be if I remained.

“After waiting a while, I softly opened the trap-door, descended the stairs, and groped my way in the dark through a long, filthy vault, which seemed to extend beneath the whole house. I stumbled over half-broken barrels, and rolled aside old stone bottles with my feet. It was evidently the cellar of the former tavern, from the bar-room of which the landlord had built the stairs leading directly into the cellar, for the

convenience of those who supplied the guests with drink. A low door led into a second cellar, which was under a wing containing the kitchen, and this, as I remembered, was again connected with the stables and barns of the establishment. From a distant point came a faint glimmer as of a lamp. A low voice croaked from the same direction: 'This way, your honor!' I followed the voice, and the light was extinguished the moment I had perceived a small window, through which I forced myself with difficulty. A figure, which, in spite of the darkness, I recognized, by the hard, bony hands with which it grasped my arm, for that of an old woman, was awaiting me outside, and dragged me on through barns and sheds, and finally among the narrow openings left between high piles of wood. I was now on familiar ground. Between the guard-house and a small grove near by there was an open space which had been used for piling up the wood for our camp-kitchen, after it had been cut. And now I also recognized the poor old woman, who was trembling in every limb, as Martin's mother.

"Creeping along among the wood-piles, we reached the grove, and, by narrow, winding paths, as far as I could determine in the perfect darkness, its northeastern corner, where it ended in a field-road, known to me from my rides about the country. Here we found a horse, fully equipped, and held by a man, whom, more by instinct than from what I could see, I took to be the worthy wagoner—Martin's godfather. The lad had told me only that morning that he had arrived in the village. 'Please to mount, sir,' he said, as he threw over me a wagoner's blouse and exchanged my

hat for a broad-brimmed one of felt, such as the pedlars wear in those parts. 'Your hat will go into the pond behind the church-yard. Turn to the left when you reach the cross-roads, and then go around the hill; that will bring you to the ferry. Then, in half an hour, you'll be across the frontier. Ride quickly; before you are missed you can be in Lissa. There is a Saxon passport in the pocket of the blouse that was not called for when I was in Warsaw three months ago. It may be of use to you. The name of Godfrey Hasse will not dishonor you. And now God be with you, sir!'

"I mounted. My lips overflowed with the gratitude that filled my heart. I begged the good man urgently to let you know of my escape, and receive your thanks. But the mother said, 'No, the countess must not know any thing till your honor is safe, else my poor boy would have to pay for it. God in heaven go with you and protect you, good sir!'

"And, accompanied by the blessings of these two faithful ones, I galloped out into the night. Putting my hand into the pocket of the blouse, I convinced myself that these good people had also provided for my travelling expenses. Besides the passport, I found a bag filled with silver thalers. Prithee, dear love, repay as soon as possible, and three or four fold, all the expenses of these excellent, noble-hearted people—for the horse, disguise, travelling-money, etc. In my desk you will find several rolls of money. Only be cautious, lest any suspicion fall upon them. The countess, my highly-revered mother-in-law, who is as wise as she is pious, will be sure to manage every thing in the most prudent manner.



“For that which these good people did for me, from a simple feeling of gratitude for the slight and by no means arduous care which I had taken of their darling, by endeavoring to protect him from the seductions of vicious companions and the like, no money, indeed, can repay them. They give me a new proof of the folly and sinfulness of the common view, that we of the nobility are better than the people; and convince me afresh that piety and high-mindedness are at home in the lowest cottage. And do we need such proofs when we remember what humble guise our Lord himself assumed during His stay on earth, and that He chose the first messengers of His gospel and His glory from the lowest of the people?

“I say nothing to-day of my wild, furious ride through Poland and Russia. Early in the morning I reached Lissa. At Kalisch, with the help of a couple of Jews, I exchanged my uniform for decent, plain clothes, and my horse for a post-chaise. Fortunately—a mere accident—I had a good purse full of gold in my pocket. This, with the wagoner’s loan, and the proceeds of the sale of my horse, and my watch and chain, sufficed to bring me here to St. Petersburg. I had come to the resolution of trying my fortune in Russia. The King of Poland is the secret enemy of my king. I will not serve him. Russia is the country for me. She is at war with Sweden. There’ll be a place for me there. With the duke co-regent I am personally acquainted, and my being a native of Brunswick is in my favor besides. And here in Russia, aside from the many adventurers who, through boldness and craft, have reached the top of the ladder, many a brave

nobleman, too, has been allowed to look Dame Fortune in the face again, after she had turned her back on him in his native land. Lasey came hither to escape from his creditors. Münnich entered the empire of the czars as a duellist. Keith came as an adventurer.

“Oh my beloved! how often and how bitterly have I repented of my flight, which has divided me from you and from my happiness perhaps for many years. Nothing but the thought that this flight alone made it possible for me to regain that which I had lost—honor, fame, title—position, indeed, the high position without which I could never venture to call upon you, beloved of my soul, to leave the noble house of your parents for a home in a new country; nothing but this thought, this hope, this firm resolve, can reconcile me to my flight.

“Here I have fared well beyond all expectation. The duke has given me an appointment in his body-guard, with the rank and pay of a major, and, as I told him frankly my whole situation, has assigned to me a considerable sum which for the present frees me from all care and from the necessity of incurring debts. It is to his gracious interest, too, that I owe the opportunity for sending this letter.

“I had regained hope and courage, when Major Winterfeld crushed me by the terrible intelligence of the cruel and arbitrary manner in which the king has punished my offence. But I only half-acknowledge his tyrannic decree. He can deprive me of my rank as an officer, but not of my title, which the Saxon dukes conferred upon my ancestors even before the

days of the Saxon emperors, when the name of Hohenzollern was only just beginning to appear in history. The count, your noble father, and the countess your venerated mother—ah, Agatha, she was a mother to me too, and I loved her as a son!—they will feel that I could not, as a cavalier, act otherwise, and will forgive me the sorrow which I have brought upon them and upon you, their best earthly treasure.

“Even if my own misfortune did not oppress me, I could not feel at ease in the atmosphere which surrounds me here. To be sure, I know nothing, as yet, of the city, as such, and of the country. But the court is one huge moral slough. Every thing here disgusts me. I would much rather not mention it to you, you soul of purity. I pity the duke, who has surely been accustomed, in his family, to a different style of princesses, from the fair, virtuous empress of Charles VI. down to the chaste and pious young Queen of Prussia. The Czarevna Elizabeth is no better than a prostitute. In her early youth already she threw herself away on a common soldier of the guards, and, since then, there has been no end to her love-intrigues. Duke Ludwig of Brunswick, the brother of the regent, who is here too, was to have married her, but he has a higher sense of honor than some other people, and gave her a name with which I will not shock your purity. And she would not have him, either, because he is weak, and ugly as the night.

“She is a shameless woman, and yet the Grand-duchess Anna, the regent, is hardly any better; only that she does not do things quite so openly. She has hardly been married two years, and yet she is already

faithless to Duke Anton, who is vexed and unhappy thereat, and yet takes no decided step to put an end to such scandalous doings. She has an intrigue with Count Lynar, the Polish-Saxon ambassador, and intends to follow the example of her aunt, the Empress Anna, who married her lover Biron to one of her ladies of honor, thus to cover up her own relation to him somewhat. The grand-duchess has affianced Lynar to one of her ladies, Fräulein von Mengden, and he has now gone home to arrange his affairs before marrying her. The duke must be aware of it, for everybody else knows it. But how can one pity such a prince? And yet I am grateful to him, and should like to be able to serve him in some way. I believe he is actually still in love with the grand-duchess, who is, indeed, quite good-looking, particularly when she sets off her pale, flabby complexion by paint, and dons her splendid court-dress. But, as she appears to us, when we are on duty, stretched upon a lounge in laziness and *ennui*, with dull eyes, and pale, bloated cheeks, in utterly-negligent attire, such as your mother, who looks to decency, would not allow her servants to wear at their coarsest work; without corsets, in a short fur jacket or loose velvet sack, which only partially cover her voluptuous form; a kerchief tied over her head, so as to avoid having her hair dressed—at such times there is not much beauty to be found in her. And in this guise she appears at the card-table, if it does not happen to be a gala-day, in the *petit-cercle*, to which, besides Fräulein von Mengden, the imperial and English ambassadors belong.

“Princess Elizabeth, on the other hand, is always

handsomely dressed, in gay, bright colors, which are very well suited to her fresh, blooming complexion, and the pleasant, cheerful expression of her face. She and the grand-duchess are on excellent terms, and the former seems to care but little for the crown, to which she, as some say, has a better right, as Peter's daughter, than Anna as the grand-daughter of Ivan. The grand-duchess is good-natured. She would like to marry Elizabeth to her brother-in-law, Duke Ludwig; but, as I have already said, he holds back. Mengden, too, hates the czarevna. It is ridiculous to observe by what littleness she sometimes shows this. Elizabeth, for instance, is in the habit of regularly leaving the court assemblies at seven o'clock. But Mengden wants to get rid of her sooner, and has all the clocks in the palace set forward an hour. And other little meannesses of the same kind.

"But all this concerns me very little. Only that these and similar intrigues have removed Münnich too from the regent and her husband; that that distinguished general is now in a kind of disfavor, which enforces upon him an unworthy inactivity, that vexes me. And still more the reason. It is only because this honest man advised too strongly against war with Prussia, toward which the intrigues of Botta and Lynar inclined the grand-duchess, contrary to all sound policy. You may depend upon it, Agatha, I shall never fight against my king. The duke has promised to send me, in the spring, when fighting recommences, to the victorious army in Finland. I have no peace here, and this miserable court-service wellnigh makes me desperate. Under Lascy and

Keith I hope to gain the laurels of which yonder scoundrel deprived me.

“And now, my heart’s beloved, may the all-loving Father have mercy upon you! Oh, why was it necessary that His chastening hand should fall upon you too, you angel, who were free from blame, when it struck me such a crushing blow?

“Farewell! Let me soon be refunded by news from you, for whom my soul thirsts. I enclose my address. Tell me that you do not disapprove of what I have done, that your parents forgive me for having caused you to shed tears of grief.

“Your MORITZ.”

When, at last, Moritz would have folded his letter, to place it in the envelope, he had to hold it to the fire, for it was wet with the burning tears which, unobserved by him, had dropped from his eyes upon it, as, while writing, he had seemed to see the weeping, loving face of his young wife turned toward him. He sealed the letter, and addressed it as follows:

“To the right honorable the noble Baroness von Hohenhorst, born Countess of the Empire von Promnitz, Castle Wildeneck, near Glogau, Silesia.”

After this he quickly closed the package, and had just finished, when the courier entered, ready for departure. The sleigh, which was to carry him to Germany, stood waiting for him at one of the gates of the palace, and Moritz soon heard the sound of its bells dying away by degrees as it sped along through the quiet night.

It was midnight. He could hear the guard being

relieved in the passage. At one o'clock another officer was to take his place; but he had no inclination to sleep. His mind was excited, and he felt that this night could bring him no refreshing rest. Still, he was much relieved by his communion with his beloved wife. He commenced walking up and down again, but, instead of giving way as before to melancholy reflections, he began to picture the future in more and more glowing colors, and thus exercised in full measure the privilege of a vigorous youth. The war with Sweden was the next thing to look forward to; but a Turkish war, too, was inevitable. It had long been felt that Biron, through jealousy of Münnich, had suffered the French to delude him into a shameful treaty of peace. A new Turkish war could not be carried on without Münnich. A brilliant campaign held out a rapid advancement to even the youngest officer. The future shone out upon Moritz like the sun from dark clouds.

Suddenly he heard a suppressed noise below, a muffled sound as of men's steps upon the stairs, and, a moment after, low voices in the passage. He rushed to the door, which opened as he reached it. A troop of grenadiers—there were thirty of them—crowded into the room. "Treason!" he cried, snatching his sword from its scabbard; but at the same moment he was collared. Two or three at once fell upon him, and held him with athletic force while another disarmed him; but no further harm was done him. Two gigantic grenadiers held him firmly by the arms, while the crowd bore him away with it. As soon as he made any motion to disengage himself from them, they held

up their clinched fists before his face, and he gave up all attempts at flight, in order to avoid personal maltreatment. Suddenly he heard a voice beside him say in German: "If you value your life, major, remain quiet. The new empress does not wish any blood shed unnecessarily." The speaker was a Saxon, named Grünstein, and one of the chief instruments of this most singular of all conspiracies.

The troop turned their still muffled steps toward the bedchamber of the regents. The foremost burst open the door, crowded into the room, and accidentally upset the night-lamp which was standing on a table by the bed. A light was brought from the anteroom, the door remained wide open; Moritz was dragged forward, and saw the wide bed in which the unfortunate couple, wakened from soundest sleep, started up bewildered as by a dream, staring half-senseless at the group of soldiers which surrounded them.

The commanding officer ordered the grand-duchess, in the name of the Empress Elizabeth, to rise and follow him. The former soon roused herself from her state of speechless alarm. A waiting-woman was called from the adjoining room, who, trembling in every limb, put on her mistress's shoes and stockings, and wrapped around her a velvet mantle lined with fur. Outwardly calm, in gloomy resignation to her fate, she allowed herself to be led away, asking for a hood to protect her head, and then inquiring of the officer whether she might not be allowed to see her cousin once more.

While this unfortunate woman by such resignation maintained a certain dignity, the duke, as if en-



tirely bereft of even the little mental power which he possessed, had sat immovable, staring by turns at his wife, and the grenadiers. When Moritz beheld the scion of the heroic race of the Guelphs in such degradation, a pain like a sword-thrust shot through him. He started, and involuntarily made an attempt to reach the duke; but he was thrust back rudely, and could only just see that two of the gigantic soldiers lifted the little man like a child, threw a fur cloak over his shoulders, so that his naked feet hung below it, and carried him down to one of the sleighs which stood in readiness. The harshest acts were performed without harshness. The rough men moved softly and still spoke in low tones.

Now, however, a group of them entered the next room, in which the little imperial prince was sleeping. Moritz beheld, through the open door, a sight which touched him even amid the painful uncertainty of his own fate. The boy lay wrapped in the soundest sleep of childhood. The grenadiers had orders not to waken him. And so these wild, rough men, who, but an hour ago, had declared themselves willing to cut down every enemy of Peter's daughter, stood quietly and patiently around the cradle, waiting for the awakening of the child, so unconsciously bereft of its crown. But Moritz was not allowed to see the end of this scene; how, finally, when the child awoke, one of the bearded men would have taken it, how it cried and screamed with fear, and was at last given to its trembling nurse. He, too, was led away, and taken, like all others arrested, to Elizabeth's palace, which for the present served as prison for all the state and court.

officials who had been apprehended, as well as for the grand-ducal family itself.

The czarevna, too, had returned thither after awaiting the result of the conspiracy, until three o'clock in the morning, in the guard-room of the Winter Palace, in the midst of her prætorian guards, the Preobrazhenski Grenadiers, and making more and more sure of their hearts by golden promises and winning manners. At Elizabeth's palace, too, the senate assembled during the night, and, one after another, all the regiments of the imperial city drew up before it, and, after receiving the declaration that the czarevna had taken possession of the parental throne, gladly, nay, jubilantly followed the example of the senate in taking the oath of allegiance.

Early the next morning, when the amazed, bewildered people flocked in from all sides, remaining, however, at a respectful distance, the new empress appeared at the window, with the imperial prince on her arm, kissing him with a coquetry of feeling that called forth a loud hurrah from the soldiers. It is reported that when the boy, in innocent delight, imitated the cry, she said: "Poor little fellow, thou dost not suspect that that hurrah is thy sentence!" Perhaps she concluded from these cheers that there was, at least for this innocent boy, a feeling still extant among the masses that might be dangerous to her, and hence resolved, with cruel selfishness, to destroy him altogether.

But no other voice was raised for the banished princes, no hand lifted for the harmless minor, whose representatives had reigned chiefly by the aid of for-

eigners, and had thus wounded the innermost core of popular feeling. Never was a revolution, at least in its first beginnings, accomplished so entirely without bloodshed. But, among the Germans, there reigned a terrible mute dismay; a fearfully black storm hovered above their heads, which was to come only too soon to a bloody outbreak.

At noon of the same day, the new empress rode in an open carriage, accompanied by a jubilant populace, to the Winter Palace, and took possession of it. The deserted house still served for some days as a prison for the grand-ducal family, as also for all others who had been apprehended, among whom the famous names of Münnich and Ostermann were conspicuous, not one of whom was conscious of less guilt than Moritz von Hohenhorst.

He was confined in the same room with the colonel of dragoons, Von Haimburg, who, although one of the most insignificant of men, was yet of influence as Anton Ulrich's adjutant and confidant, and therefore detested. The curtain which hides from us the fate of an unfortunate friend must remain drawn for the present.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A PIETIST HOUSEHOLD.

THE letter reached Castle Wildeneck in safety. There, two women had knelt every night and morning, and in many hours of solitude, in prayer for the beloved fugitive and his escape. When Agatha at last received the ardently-longed-for letter, she tore it open quickly, and with trembling hands. With love-thirsty eyes she drank in merely the chief features; then she hastened to her mother, forgetting all customary ceremony, which hardly permitted, in noble families of that time, such free access of the children to the parents. In Agatha, too, submission to these forms of etiquette had grown to a second nature; but her overwhelming agitation carried her away.

"He is saved, gracious mamma," she cried, "he is beyond all danger! Just read this, dearest mamma; he is in Russia!"

It was almost dark in her mother's room; the heavy curtains were let down; the countess was seated in her arm-chair, wrapped in blissful contemplation; opposite her, on a low ottoman, sat a stranger in clerical dress, whom Agatha did not observe

until she was quite close to her mother. He was one of the wandering preachers, who, since the awakening of Protestant Christianity from its long trance of lifeless orthodoxy, were continually passing through the country, and were always sure to find, at least in some parts of Germany, a hospitable shelter with the better portion of the high nobility. Toward the middle of the eighteenth century, the period in which the scene of this tale is laid, the religious paroxysm was diminishing, and gradually became absorbed in Moravianism. But the family of the Counts of Promnitz, in all its branches, withered though they were, remained true to the old sacred love. Countess Bigna, in particular, descended from the princely race of Reuss, was up to her death one of the chief supporters of the pure original doctrine of Spener.

Agatha started on seeing the stranger. But the countess received her with her usual look of love and kindness, indeed, with increased warmth and mildness. For the spiritual communion with the Reverend Mr. Schienmayer had lifted her soul to higher regions. This man of God had just preached a sort of private sermon to her, in which he had convinced his humble patroness, still more strongly than she was already, that we poor sinful creatures must *creep* after the gentle Lamb of God on our knees, if we would hope ever to attain unto it. She therefore did not even put out her hand for the letter, which had brought such happy yet such merely carnal intelligence, but said :

“If the Lord’s mercy has saved the erring one, my daughter, let us not delay to thank our heavenly Saviour in all humility for His intercession. It is

plainly His hand which has sent to us this excellent man, the Reverend Mr. Schienmayer."

The countess paused while the preacher made a humble obeisance, and Agatha, whose spirit was far away, an equally profound courtesy.

"He will find," continued the countess, "the words of sacrifice for our poor benighted souls, which will be acceptable to the Lord.—Kneel, my daughter."

And as she herself rose, preparatory to kneeling, she remarked to the preacher, who was ever ready for prayer:

"My son-in-law, a worthy nobleman, and a believer, though still in the outer courts, and in the bonds of the flesh, has been delivered from great danger by the Lord of hosts. You have probably heard of his affair. Pray with us, my good sir, pray that this experience may be sanctified unto him!"

Agatha, holding in her hand the hardly-glanced-at letter, every word of which seemed to decide her life's happiness, sank upon her knees like the others, half-beside herself. She pressed the letter, the voice of her fondly-beloved, closely to her heart, and struggled in vain to tear her mind away from it, and bring her soul into the right frame for prayer. For the unconscious, trembling, joyous feeling of gratitude which filled her whole heart, the turbulent, rapturous transport which pervaded her inmost being—such a condition of the soul she had not been taught to call the right frame of mind for prayer; her education having been based upon religious principles which did not acknowledge a love for the Creator *in His creature*, but only the love for the creature *for the sake of the Creator*.

The pious man had long since commenced his prayer, in a lamentable, whining tone. He besought the dear Saviour, for the sake of this His faithful handmaiden and her child, to have mercy still further upon the erring wanderer, and to light for him, who was still groping about amid the weak rays of the dim lamp of human wisdom, the torch of conviction. "Take from him," he moaned, "take from him the filthy garment of his own righteousness! Wash off, beloved Jesus, the scab of his sins with Thy precious blood! Suffer him to rest in Thy wounds like a sucking child in its cradle! Let him, in Thine incomprehensible wisdom, find, by the thorny path in which Thou art leading him, the way to the crowned Lamb. Let him not thirst too long for the hour of sealing, for the hour of the pouring out of Thy grace! Come, O friend of souls, O dispenser of mercies, come!"

While he thus held forth, for full half an hour, sighing and groaning, and accompanied by the moans and sighs of the countess, Agatha had vainly endeavored to follow the servant of God in his ascetic digressions. She could not help it; she could hardly refrain from giving loud, jubilant utterance to the one rapturous feeling, that her adored husband was saved. At length she gave up the struggle, and prayed silently in her own way and with quiet tears:

"Forgive, oh forgive Thy sinful handmaiden, dear Saviour, for thinking more of her loved one's temporal welfare at this moment than of his spiritual good. Thou surely wouldst have us love each other—us, who were joined together in Thy name. Thou knowest, too, that the poor fugitive loves Thee at heart, and

that, though he may be proud before men, he bows in humility before Thee and Thy sacred name. Peter, too, struck the high-priest's servant, and yet he was one of Thine elect, and Thou didst choose him among the twelve, to build Thy church upon him. And though he was a frail, sinful vessel, like us all, and denied Thee in the hour of fleshly weakness, yet he said with truth: 'Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee.' O dear Saviour, protect my beloved husband still further with Thy powerful shield, and let me not, poor, weak reed that I am, oh let me not wait too long for the hour of reunion!"

The house of Promnitz belonged to the pious households of the nobility in which, after the purified Church of Germany had, by degrees, become benumbed by tenets and dogmas, and lain for a full century in a death-like sleep, it had found an asylum, on its awaking about, seventy years before. The religious movements of our day have often been compared with those of the "awakened" and so-called pietists of that time. And yet they were entirely different at root. While *over-ripeness* and exhaustion of the intellectual soil have led many of our contemporaries to similar results, it was in the other case just the *un-ripeness* of the fruit, which had fallen before its time, that caused it to decay so soon. With our contemporaries we have nothing to do for the present. I have taken my reader back more than a century. At that period a luxuriant crop grew up exuberantly from a soil which had been but little used for other mental plants, and was now richly impregnated with the half-decayed fruit. There was many an unhealthy, even



poisonous weed among it; but even where it was most barren, most noisome, most interspersed with tares, it was yet more pleasing in the eye of God than the rotten fruit of Lutheran and Calvinist Pharisaism itself, from which had sprung the seed of these fanatical, absurd, and in every case thoroughly tasteless errors.

The breath of the Holy Spirit moved from west to east. The marvellous religious impulse which the pious Spener had first awakened among the high nobility of Middle and North Germany, found, about the time of this excellent man's death, one of its chief scenes of action in Lower Lusatia and Northern Silesia, where the family of Promnitz had its home. Agatha's father belonged to one of its collateral branches. While the senior line maintained quite a small court, and succeeded in combining the sincerest, most insipid pietism with the strictest forms of old-fashioned French ceremony, he, one of the younger cousins, had been portioned off with some estates in Silesia, of which Wildeneck, not far from Glogau, served him as a place of residence.

Count Ernest Casimir—this was the name of Agatha's father—was by nature far less ascetic than his relative in Sorau. He had seen the world in his youth, and had fought, as an imperial officer, under Prince Eugene of Savoy. Various slights and injuries to which he, as a Lutheran, had been subjected, had caused him to resign, and withdraw to his estates. A marriage with the pious Countess Benigna of Reuss had confirmed him in the religious principles which were the result of his education, and her stronger

character and her more decided convictions had enabled her by degrees, and indeed almost involuntarily, to acquire considerable influence over him and the whole household. Perhaps, too, the fact that his pious wife had brought to him an ample dowry, which covered many a youthful indiscretion, contributed toward insuring her a position of importance.

Countess Benigna, after the first few years of her marriage, which had not passed entirely without some conflicts with her husband on the subject of the *Adiaphora*,\* had succeeded in stripping off gradually, with shrewd, gentle hand, and with much skill, all fetters of the evil world, and banishing from her house dancing, card-playing, theatre-going, novel-reading, etc. There was, however, no lack of spiritual food to satisfy the greedy craving of the day for such enjoyments. Besides the regular morning devotions, and the prayers before dinner and supper, for all of which the whole household assembled, every visit of a clergyman, or person otherwise qualified by piety, was taken advantage of, for listening to sermons and expositions, and the hospitality of the house of Promnitz in all its branches encouraged a never-ending flow of guests of the above-mentioned class.

A house of this stamp could have little power of attraction for the world's children, at least before its beautiful daughter grew up to be a woman. But it was by no means in accordance with the views of the pious classes of the period to put an end to all social intercourse with those who differed in their opinions,

\* *Adiaphora*, such practices and religious opinions as were considered indifferent and non-essential.

as long as they kept within the bounds of morality. On the contrary, they looked upon a sectarian exclusiveness as unchristian, and endeavored—in many individual cases not without a secret spiritual pride—to keep up an affectionate relation with the children of the world, who on their part jeered at them and shunned them by turns. Visits were therefore occasionally though rarely interchanged with the nobility of the neighborhood, and the countess had too much tact and dignity to trouble those, who, from choice and hardness of heart, were still loitering in the outer courts of the temple, with a revelation of its glory. It was only when the worldly pleasantry passed certain bounds—and the coarse manners of the time made this quite as likely to happen among the country gentry as a morality corrupted by the influence of France caused it to occur among the nobility of the courts and cities—that she would unhesitatingly throw out a serious hint to the effect that “foolery was not becoming in Christians.”

If the Countess Promnitz, by her piety, by the prudence with which she superintended a large household and maintained order among servants and dependants, by refined, truly noble manners, and particularly as a benefactress of the poor, had won universal esteem, not only in the wide circle of those who were surrounded, as by an invisible net, by the bounds of the love of the crowned Lamb, but in all the surrounding country, and her whole life was animated by a holy zeal, she yet had her sweet recreation, her soul-refreshing entertainment. This was the long-established custom, so popular with many pious persons, called “thumbing.”

No important household business was undertaken, no journey was made, no contract entered into with any tenant, dealer, or buyer, and altogether no step of any consequence ever taken, without first asking the advice of the ever-ready Word of God. After a short prayer, the countess would insert her thumbs between the leaves of the Bible, and was sure of finding, on the pages thus opened at, the best advice, the true remedy, or, if it was a matter of feeling, the greatest comfort. She had succeeded so often in this, and the texts pointed out had invariably proved so suitable and appropriate, that even the count, though at first somewhat incredulous, became converted. In consequence, he would demonstrate to all who might still express a doubt, with eloquence, or at least with many words, that not only Count Zinzendorf and the learned and pious Moser had always taken this mode of arriving at a decision in doubtful cases, but that even the godly Spener had not disapproved of it, but had permitted his children to practise it, as quite an innocent thing. He was inexhaustible, moreover, in examples of its success of escapes from great dangers in consequence of the advice thus obtained, of consolation in the deepest sorrow, and even of conversions effected in this manner.

But this trifling, this want of taste in form and expression, constituted only the outer shell of German pietism; its core was true Christian charity, which is not satisfied with being active by faith alone, but would also be known by its fruits. If the old arch-Lutheran Amsdorf, in his blind fanaticism for the sufficing power of faith, fell into the absurdity of asserting

that "good works were prejudicial to salvation," if the purified Church had been, for more than a century, far behind the mother-church in all manifestations of charity, the former was finally thoroughly vindicated by the institutions of Francke and all that was connected with them. An active Christian charity had since become one of the healthiest fruits of so-called pietism. In Silesia, too, asylums for widows and orphans, and schools for the poor, had been founded, but had been abolished again by strict government measures, as being independent of the *Catholic* Church. Countess Benigna of Reuss, although she too considered a blind submission in all things to those in authority a Christian duty, did not, however, allow herself to be disconcerted by this, for she said to herself: "The law of God is higher than the ordinances of men."

While still a young woman, when on a visit to the Duchess of Oels, she had witnessed the emigration of the pious Mischke, in consequence of the sudden destruction of the charitable institution which had been erected in that place. With prayers and tears she had seen the long procession pass the palace; widows and orphans, each carrying a small bundle, led by the venerable pastor and the six preceptors. They went on their way, resigned to God's will, praising Him for His decree with weak voices touching to hear. Since then the countess had retrenched her household expenses as far as propriety permitted in a nobleman's family; had conscientiously avoided all extravagance in dress, and never, without prayer, had collected money from friends. Thus she had succeeded, aided chiefly by her relatives in Sorau, in reconstructing the de-

molished institution, on a smaller scale, in her own home.

As a woman, she was less exposed to the vigilant eye of the government. Her activity, moreover, was for the present confined to her own sex, in which a pietistic development was considered less dangerous. She did not venture, however, to erect a special building for the purpose. She merely arranged a few rooms on the ground-floor of Castle Wildeneck as school-rooms. At the same time she collected all the orphan girls from the neighboring villages and the surrounding country, and put them out to board with pious widows, some of them among her tenants, whose cottages were clustered around the manor, some in the village of Rauschwitz, in the immediate vicinity. On these widows and orphans she kept a watchful eye. Ever ready to help them either with advice or in deed, she knew every thing that happened among them, and it would have been hard to decide whether they loved or feared the countess most.

Under such influences Agatha had grown up. She was the youngest of seven daughters, all of whom but herself had died in early youth. Providence had denied to this branch of the house of Promnitz all male descendants, a dispensation all the more painful for Count Casimir, that the principal line in Sorau seemed also destined to become extinct with Count Erdmann's childless sons, and the name of Promnitz appeared to be dying out.

Countess Benigna, when the measles and a malignant dysentery epidemic among children carried away one after the other of her tender buds, thanked the

Lord Jesus on her knees, for assembling around His throne these little ones, so dearly bought with His blood, before their pure garments had become soiled by the filth of the sinful world, and sang, with trembling voice, a hallelujah to the Lord for every wound which His hand inflicted. But how she could reconcile with this spirit the unspeakable anguish which rent her maternal heart again and again, as one little coffin after another was borne from the house, containing, as it were, members of her body which had been torn from it—that I know not. Perhaps she thought herself, at such moments, a great sinner. Enough that a sevenfold love was lavished by both parents on the only pledge which God had left them, although the countess in particular felt that this child was the sole tie which still bound her to this wicked world.

The young countess, or, as the unmarried daughters of counts were wont to be called in those days, the *comtesse*, was instructed to a certain degree also in all the worldly acquirements which her rank demanded; i. e., she took lessons from a governess, a lady of rank, belonging to a refugee family, in French and all kinds of female handiwork. The school-master of Rauschwitz, who had studied in Halle, and had been brought up in the Orphan-House of that city—an humble soul who kissed the hem of the countess's garments—instructed the "gracious *comtesse*" in reading and writing, and, as he was fortunately very musical, in playing on the harpsichord and singing. The clergyman of the same village, a man after the hearts of the noble couple, for he also belonged to the school of Francke, had taken upon himself, aside from her religious in-

struction, a course in geography, and another in universal history, in which latter his young pupil had to learn so many dates by heart that she frequently shed tears over them. He also commenced, at the particular wish of the count, to give the young lady lessons in mythology, "because she would not otherwise be able to understand any poems which she might read at some future day;" in connection with which, however, the clergyman was politely requested to accompany this instruction with the necessary Christian notes and explanations. But these lessons became, by degrees, so distasteful to the countess, that they were discontinued at her urgent entreaty.

Finally, that nothing might be wanting which was requisite to the education of a young lady of rank, the countess even made up her mind, when Agatha was about thirteen, to join a circle of noble families who were in the habit of engaging a ballet-master from Vienna for the instruction in dancing of their young ladies and gentlemen. The countess deferred in this matter to the wishes of her husband, who, like many pietists of the high nobility, was of opinion that dancing exerted the best of influence on the outward deportment, and therefore considered the acquisition of this frivolous art as most essential, even though its practice should be entirely discontinued in the future. The countess conformed the more readily to this view, that her friend Count Zinzendorf had set her the example in so doing. He himself had told her that he had submitted to instruction in dancing, for the sake of its favorable influence on the carriage and the movements of the body; but that he had never omit-



ted to invoke the aid of the Holy Ghost before each lesson.

In remembrance of this hint, the countess too enjoined upon her daughter to pray to the Saviour before the commencement of every lesson, and to entreat His protection from all temptation. The little *comtesse* was accustomed to obey her mamma blindly. She therefore prayed conscientiously on each occasion, but could not refrain, at the same time, from revolving in her little head the question as to what temptation there could be in her skipping to and fro, or gliding along in the minuet, to the time of the music.

She comprehended much more readily why her pious mother made her, even at an early age, the instrument of her benevolence, and her assistant in the instruction of her orphan pupils. For, in order to avoid all interference from the government, the countess had appointed no paid teachers, either male or female. The school-master was the only person who, for a slight addition to his small salary, was glad to undertake the instruction in writing and singing. The Countess herself superintended the religious department; the lessons in reading and spelling were assigned to the young *comtesse*, while she willingly gave up by turns the services of her maid and her "chamber-wench," as the inferior waiting-maids were called at that day, so that they might teach the girls sewing and knitting.

Agatha's instruction was by far the most popular in the school. And truly it was beautiful and touching to behold the lovely, angelic child, seated on a raised chair in the middle of the room, surrounded by

twenty or thirty more earthly childish forms, and reading to them, while every eye hung upon her lovingly, a chapter from the Bible; or to watch her dividing the girls into classes according to their capacities, hearing the spelling of the smaller ones, or directing the reading-lessons of the more advanced.

This, however, was the only kind of intercourse with the village-children which the noble couple allowed their daughter to hold, except that she was always her mother's almoner, particularly to the sick and suffering; and no child of a peasant, or even of an untitled family, was ever brought to the castle to *play* with the little girl; for the high nobility of that period were very strict with regard to the division of the classes; the pietistic nobility, which looked upon the different orders of society as ordained of God, particularly so. With all the simplicity of their mode of life, they were punctilious in the observance of a rigid etiquette, which had already partially disappeared from more fashionable circles through the influence of the easier manners of the French. Even Zinzendorf, before his views had matured, and, as during his subsequent labors, he divested himself of all worldly glory, ascended the pulpit, when he was about to preach for the first time, with a decoration attached to his black surplice, and a *Heiduck*, or servant in Hungarian costume, carrying the Bible after him.

Yet, in spite of every constraint, Agatha grew up in an atmosphere of love. She could therefore hardly be any thing but happy, however few youthful pleasures she might enjoy. Nevertheless, a psychological observer, had such a one been near, could not

but have noticed that the narrow-mindedness of those about her, and the illiberality of the views which she heard expressed, engendered in her a kind of unconscious mental oppression. While her mother felt at home within the bounds of a decided dulness of existence, and a calm, devout serenity pervaded her whole nature, and won her universal esteem and affection, Agatha often experienced a dull *ennui*, a kind of wistful satiety, which at times gave to her beautiful eyes an almost melancholy expression. She would yawn when she had to read to her parents from Frau von Schlebusch's "Spiritually-domestic Medicine-chest for the Soul," and often, at evening, would take a volume of Jacob Böhme's works to her room with her, and read in it with vague edification, although she could hardly have understood much of the theosophic effusions of the singular cobbler. Whenever, at the family devotions, the choice of the hymn to be sung was left to her, she was sure to select one by Paul Gerhardt, or, better still, by Scheffler, while the sentimental tinge of the hymns of Zinzendorf or Freylinghausen, which edified her mother, was distasteful to the poetic feeling latent within her.

Her little flower-garden, which shone out brightly from among the stiffly-cut hedges and dark walls of yew of the castle-garden, and an old *volière* in the latter, in which she kept a number of foreign birds of gay plumage, were indeed the only poetry of her youthful life. She saw but little society of her own age; but, from time to time, she would make a call on some noble family of the neighborhood, or in Glogau, where she occasionally passed a few winter months

with her parents. At such times she would hear the young ladies speak of the pleasures of life in Breslau or in Vienna; of assemblies, and the opera, but without ever feeling much curiosity about the charms of the world. And indeed, as has been mentioned, this intercourse was very rare, and confined to but a few families; the more so, that the nearest neighbors were mostly beneath the young countess in rank, and the officers' families in Glogau were in great part Catholics.

Thus Agatha had almost insensibly grown up to womanhood, and, if she had been exceedingly lovely and attractive already as a child, she now promised to develop an extraordinary beauty—a tall, slender figure, as yet without the fulness, the fully-matured outlines, which belong to *perfect* beauty; more bud than full-blown rose, but light and graceful in every motion, and not without a certain inherited refined dignity. The perfectly regular, Grecian formation of her face might perhaps also have been called too thin, too delicate. But a dazzlingly-white skin, and cheeks on which bloomed the loveliest roses, could not but ensure her against every suspicion of feeble health. The want of fulness in her face made her fine, soulful eyes appear almost too large to those who were inclined to find fault. The same objection might have been made to her mouth; but the exquisite teeth, the rich hair, and the wondrously pure virgin brow, could not but call forth the admiration of even those who might have envied her.

As a matter of course, all these charms were not lost upon the young officers in garrison at Glogau. While heretofore they had carefully kept at a distance

from Wildeneck and the "old fanatic," as they called the countess, they now, one by one, took steps toward being introduced to the family. But all their endeavors were vain. The count and countess knew how to ward off all such visitors, without any breach of politeness, although there were young men of their own rank among them, and there was every reason to suppose that they had serious intentions; for Agatha, as the only daughter of parents who were not, indeed, wealthy, but still very well off, could be looked upon as quite a good match. But should they throw away their jewel upon a papist? Rather than that, they avoided the city entirely, so as to cut off any possible imperial interference, and thus, after Agatha had reached her sixteenth year, the house in Glogau stood empty also in winter.

The marriage of their beloved child at a proper time, and in conformity with her own station, was frequently the subject of conversation between the affectionate parents. For about fifty years past, the descendants of the pietistic nobility—which comprised about twenty families—had always intermarried. Agatha's parents did not look beyond this circle for carrying out their wishes. The marriages in these pious houses presented in rare succession a certain degree of domestic happiness. Even a disagreement was rarely heard of. No divorce had ever taken place among them, and the number of children with which they were blessed was incredible. Most of these marriages had been the result of free choice and affection. The wooer would apply to the parents, who acquiesced, with the condition of the daughter's

free consent. But if there was no question of compulsion, there was also none of any romantic affection. A fervent love of Christ in common, and a moderate liking for each other, seemed quite sufficient for the joint pilgrimage through life. Indeed, "carnal affection," and too great a "creature delight" in each other, were held to be rather a drawback to the quiet enjoyment of married life, than conducive to it. These excellent people were in constant fear of becoming faithless to Christ, through love of the creature. Count Zinzendorf voluntarily gave up the young Countess Castell, with the full consciousness of bearing a deep love for her in his heart, because he feared that she might become too dear to him. He willingly sacrificed his love, without the shadow of a necessity, to the Lord, and married another "faithful handmaiden" of Christ, for whom he entertained merely a hearty good-will. And in exactly the same spirit did Spener, Moser, Büsching, and countless other pious men, choose their wives, with whom they mostly lived in a tolerably happy marriage relation.

This was the point of view from which Agatha's parents started when they thought of the marriage of their daughter, and perhaps there would have been found among the cousins in the third or fourth degree—a marriage between near relations was disapproved of by many—some count who was pious enough for the former, and sufficiently attractive to the girl herself; perhaps she would have spun out her life in peaceful, devout wedlock, rich in children, like hundreds of other countesses, and I should have had nothing further to tell about her, if—Providence had not decreed otherwise.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE SPRING-TIME OF LIFE.

AGATHA was just eighteen when the still life of her existence was broken in upon by an event which, while it was the first of a series which affected the whole world, was also destined to exert the most decisive influence upon her own fortunes, and to be for her the beginning of a new life.

The King of Prussia suddenly appeared at the head of a powerful army, on the frontier of Silesia, and the scornful rejection of his demands could hardly have reached him from Vienna, before he had entered the country as conqueror. The young queen was unprepared ; the half of Silesia was already in the hands of her hostile neighbor before she could recover from her alarm and surprise.

The Protestant inhabitants of Silesia, restricted and oppressed in various ways as they had been for more than a hundred years by the Catholic government, looked forward to the King of Prussia, one of the chief props of the Protestant Church, as a deliverer. But when, immediately after his entrance, his magnanimous proclamation enjoined perfect quiet and absence of fear upon all inhabitants ; when the unimpaired pos-

session of their property was insured to them, and the free exercise of their religion to all denominations; when all the requisites of the army were paid for in cash, and the strictest discipline was enforced among the troops, all hearts went out to meet the young king, and no conqueror was ever more joyously received.

The Count and Countess Promnitz shared these sentiments. Nevertheless, they had thought it advisable, upon first receiving intelligence of the gathering of the storm, not to await its breaking out at their lonely castle; for there were but few towns or villages in Silesia which were not associated with some fearful tradition from the war between Sweden and Poland, or even the Thirty Years' War. There was hardly a form of barbarity extant in those terrible times to which the peaceful inhabitants had not been subjected; hardly a humiliation of any kind to which the nobility on their estates had not been forced to submit. Count Promnitz, therefore, resolved to remove his family to the neighboring neutral territory of Saxony. But, as the "thumbs" would not elicit any suitable answer on this subject, and repeated attempts failed (which, however, was never mentioned in later life), the time which should have been employed for the journey was wasted, and the Prussian army was approaching before a decision had been arrived at. Feeling uncertain about the safety of the public roads, the noble couple, chiefly concerned on their daughter's account, finally came to the sudden resolve of retiring to Glogau, and occupy their house in that city for the rest of the winter, it being already December; but they had hardly taken possession of it when the fortress was invested



and regularly besieged. The hereditary Prince of Dessau established his headquarters in Rauschwitz, while the king, with the rest of the army, penetrated farther into the country.

After a siege of less than two months the Prussians took the fortress of Glogau by storm during a dark, tempestuous night; but never yet had the world seen an assault like this, which conquered walls and hearts at once. The Prussians took possession of the city, but no house was plundered, no citizen's rights encroached upon, not a single person offended by any bold arrogance on the part of the victors. The only thing demanded of the inhabitants was a ready reception of the wounded. The hospital was small, and overfilled with the wounded of the garrison.

Thus it happened that at an early hour one morning—it was on the 10th of March, a day that impressed itself indelibly upon Agatha's memory—a bier with a wounded officer was brought to the house of Count Promnitz, who was requested by the accompanying surgeon to give shelter to the invalid. A ball had already grazed the shoulder of the latter at midnight, when the storming began, but the slight wound which it occasioned had been disregarded by the intrepid soldier, until at length the loss of blood had brought on a deep fainting-fit.

The countess readily undertook the care of the young warrior. Strong of nerve and tender of heart, this was really the element in which the noblest part of her nature could unfold itself. The founding of a hospital had long been one of her favorite plans, and she had prepared herself for it by the acquiring of vari-

ous kinds of useful knowledge, and exercised herself on numerous occasions among relatives and the poor in the treatment of wounds. The surgeon, after examining and binding up that of the young officer, soon saw that he could safely leave him in charge of the lady of the house, and hastened away to attend to others.

The young man had hardly recovered his consciousness while under the surgeon's hands, when, at last, he opened his eyes and found himself stretched upon a lounge, clothed in fresh linen, and wrapped in an old silk dressing-gown of the count's, and beheld two noble-looking ladies standing by his couch; he attempted to raise himself quickly, but the countess restrained him, spoke to him with motherly kindness, and exhorted him to be careful. He looked at her silently with an expression of profound gratitude. By her side stood Agatha, like a lovely vision, her large, tearful eyes turned upon him in deep pity. On those eyes his own rested, long, fervently, as if held there by magic, until he swooned away again, and, being recalled to consciousness by artificial means, fell into a deep sleep.

The reader has long since recognized in the wounded officer our poor friend Baron Moritz von Hohenhorst. A week passed before he could move freely without increasing his fever to a dangerous degree; for two weeks more he was detained within the fortress by command of his chief, the hereditary Prince of Dessau; for this prince thought highly of him and wished him to take care of himself, and be thoroughly cured before he again entered upon his duties. He

therefore assigned to him some slight employment in the regular occupation of the fortress. These three weeks, however, were sufficient to place him in the closest relation to the whole family of Promnitz, and with each of its members in a different way.

The count found in Moritz an entertaining companion, doubly welcome in these anxious war-times, which cut him off from all outside occupation, and who listened with interest to his reminiscences of Prince Eugène of Savoy and the Turkish war. The countess was prejudiced in his favor, for various other reasons besides that of his claim to her Christian pity. He belonged to a Saxon family of the oldest nobility, and could show that a Bruno "auf dem Hohen-Horst"\* had come to high honors already under Otto the Illustrious. Having lost his parents at an early age, a pious guardian had caused him to be educated at the Pedagogium† in Halle, where, during his boyhood, he had been placed under the immediate supervision of Francke, until that worthy man was taken away by death. What followed was less satisfactory, though still favorable enough to keep up the interest of the countess. The young man had attended the University of Leipsic, and, without any great struggle, had freed himself from all the mentally-limiting influences of his education, while he still retained the firm belief in a revelation which had grown up with him. His inclinations directed him chiefly to the æsthetic studies; he avoided all excesses of a coarse student-life, and, with the warmest feel-

\* Horst, eery; auf dem Hohen-Horst, on the high eery.

† A high-school attached to the Orphan-House in Halle.

ing for his neglected, scorned, even cruelly-abused German land and language, he joined the circle of thinking young men of kindred mind—as Schlegel, Cramer, Gartner, and others—who, without following the Swiss school of writers implicitly, had, under the immediate influence of the classics and of English literature, emancipated themselves from Gottsched.

Moritz had hardly finished his studies, when, through the failure of an important mercantile house, he lost his whole fortune. Upon this he entered the Prussian army, which step he had long since felt inclined to take, and consequently arranged his studies accordingly. The favorable impression created by his manly and agreeable exterior, his irreproachable morals, and his uncommon strategic and mathematical attainments, soon secured for him an advantageous position, and, shortly after, the hereditary Prince of Dessau appointed him one of his adjutants.

Having now sketched Moritz's relations to the parents, and given the short outline of his life which he communicated to them, I fear I shall find it more difficult to describe in as few words his situation with regard to the daughter.

I do not believe in love at first sight, at least not a *conscious* love. And yet it is certain that the look which the young officer, on awaking, turned upon the maiden bending over him in compassionate anxiety—a long, deep, wondering look—penetrated to her inmost heart. He was suffering. He was the first man of any mental superiority whom she had ever known. As long as he was obliged to keep quiet, lying on the lounge, and she, sharing the care of him with her

mother, sat beside the latter, by his couch, he conversed almost exclusively with the elder lady. But Agatha was perfectly aware that he was speaking for her too, and knew whenever he looked at her, while her own eyes were bent upon her work, and that he did so often, and furtively, and again and again. She would blush deeply, and yet it was so sweet to be gazed at so silently, and yet far sweeter still to hear him speak.

For his voice had a full, noble, manly tone, and her native tongue commenced only through his lips to grow dear to her. Her father and the other gentlemen of her acquaintance spoke the impure, unrefined German of the day with the broadest Silesian or even Austrian accent. Her mother talked as she had learned to talk in her youth, interlarding her Thuringian, old-fashioned German with French words and expressions. In social intercourse with the neighboring nobility, the language chiefly made use of was French, which was poor enough indeed, but, nevertheless, softer to Agatha's ears than the coarse German of her home, and which she much preferred to the latter. But, in Hohenhorst's pure, cultivated German, there was a harmony that she had never heard before, and his mode of expressing himself had a grace and conciseness, an almost epigrammatic brevity, that were entirely new to her. With marvellous skill he would condense her good mother's diffuse sentences, or her own incoherent attempts at describing one thing or relating another, into a comprehensive succinctness. It sounded strangely unreal when, on fitting occasions, he would quote poetry in conversation,

and even German poetry—she had never heard the like, except from her nurse, who at times, for the better expression of her feelings, used to repeat a fragment of some old German *Volkslied* or popular lay. Every thing in him was new to her, *new* and yet not strange. He was to her like an apparition from a world unknown to her, and yet long since familiar through her dreams. She began to be animated by a quiet inward happiness, which beamed involuntarily from her eyes, whose expression no one could now have called melancholy, though they still retained a dreamy, wistful look, which imparted to her an indescribable charm. It seemed as if each awakening morn found her more beautiful, and the servants of the house began privately to make remarks about “the gracious *comtesse* and the young officer.”

Yet these two had never been alone together for a moment. When Moritz had recovered sufficiently to go out for a walk during the day, with his arm in a sling, the surgeon, however, still urgently advising him to keep quiet and insisting upon his using the injured arm as little as possible, the countess, one night when prayers were over and the servants dismissed, proposed that the rest of the quiet evening should be devoted to reading aloud Jean Labadie’s “*Protestation de bonne Foy*,” etc., for she was well enough versed in French to admire her guest’s fine pronunciation. Moritz expressed his esteem for Labadie, but requested permission to make the ladies acquainted with the snow-drops of German literature, whose spring was just opening. During his campaign, as well as in travelling, he always carried some favorite books

with him. In German poetry, the writer most admired by the more intelligent German youth was Haller, whose best poems, crowded with fine thoughts, and wonderfully concise in expression *for that period*, appeared at a time when the whole German Parnassus was still floating about in a deluge of shallow water.

When the countess had given her permission, and she and the count, who cared as little for Labadie as for Haller, had settled themselves in their arm-chairs, Agatha, delighted, brought her embroidery. The four wax-candles were placed close together upon the table, before the reader. In order to have enough light for her work, the young countess was obliged to seat herself close beside him. Moritz, not without embarrassment, drew his book from his pocket, and opened it at his favorite poem, "The Alps."

Our young friend had hardly read three pages, with sonorous voice and subdued expression, when a low snore announced that the poet's philosophical introduction had proved a lullaby for the count. The reader noticed that the countess too sat there with a very serious, almost forbidding mien. It was only the rapt attention of Agatha, before whose soul, as it were, a curtain was rising, behind which lay entirely unknown but long-yearned-for regions, that gave him the courage to proceed. He came to the lines:

"No harsh restraint can ever Love's beauteous realm enthrall  
Here, where the laws of Nature alone obedience claim;  
Whoe'er of love is worthy, is freely loved by all:  
True merit makes *all* worthy—with love it is the same."

Here the countess interrupted him with the observation:

"That appears very well in a poem, but those are dangerous principles. Altogether, a heathen poet might have written these verses quite as well as a Christian author."

Moritz went on, though slightly disconcerted, and reached the following passage :

"As soon as a young shepherd has felt the gentle flame,  
Caught by a manly soul from a maiden's witching eyes,  
His lips are never sealed by the timid thought of blame ;  
He frankly speaks the feelings that in his bosom rise.  
She listens, and, if truly his suit deserve her smile,  
Speaks as she feels, and, acting with Nature for her guide,  
Can see no ground of scorn where the heart intends no guile,  
In words by passion prompted, by virtue sanctified.  
Here, too, the tie that binds them endures no pompous rite—  
He loves her, she loves him, and their marriage vow is this.  
Their wedlock oft is only the mutual troth they plight,  
Its oath a simple yes, and its seal a single kiss.  
The nightingale salutes them with forest melodies,  
Love makes of soft, light mosses their couch beneath the shade ;  
The lone wood is their witness, their tapestry the trees,  
And to her bridegroom's bosom Love leads the willing maid.  
Thrice-happy pair ! the envy of those that wear a crown !  
Love makes your slumbers balmy, while Hate is couched on down."

Here the countess cleared her throat ominously, and asked in a severe tone :

"Herr von Hohenhorst, are there any more such equivocal passages in that poem? In that case I would rather request you not to read any more of it!"

"You need have no fear, honored madame," replied Moritz, with a suppressed smile. "The poet begins with the inhabitants of Switzerland, whom he looks upon as being nearer to a state of nature than those of other portions of the world. Then he proceeds to



the description of the grand beauties of natural features themselves, which he considers alike as the source and the bulwarks of the morality of his countrymen."

"After that which monsieur the baron has just read, I should not think that the *moralité* of these people could be very pure."

Moritz felt that all explanations would be vain here. "If the gracious countess will permit me to proceed, she will assuredly admire the poet's power and skill in depicting the various beauties of the mountains and other natural features of Switzerland."

"Without doubt," replied the countess. "Yet too ardent a creature delight in the created world is always hazardous. I would not say by that that we ought not, to a certain degree, take pleasure in such earthly gifts as God's mercy has granted to us, as long as we do so with grateful reference to the Giver of all good. I myself read the 'Earthly Pleasure in God' of the poet Brockes, some years ago, with much satisfaction."

"You will find, gracious madame, that Haller is no less pious, only in another way."

"*Eh bien*, monsieur the baron will please proceed, then."

But Moritz thought it advisable to skip the next fifty or sixty lines, which contained some further pictures of wedded and domestic happiness, and only to begin again at parts specially devoted to the description of sublime or lovely natural scenery. He soon, however, had reason to convince himself that the mind of a pious follower of the school of Spener had

room for no spiritual interest beside the one thing needful. A heavy regular breathing from the arm-chair of the venerable lady soon announced that she too had unconsciously followed the example of her husband, and before long a regular duet between a vigorous bass and a softer soprano accompanied the voice of the reader.

Moritz looked up, and met the arch smile of Agatha. "Poor papa and mamma are tired," she whispered. But her heightened color, her sparkling eyes, showed him plainly that *she* was not tired.

"We will not disturb them," he replied, in the same tone, and moved still nearer to her. He continued to read with subdued voice. From time to time he would look up. Her work had long since dropped from her hands. His glance met her eye each time. She sat listening intently, breathlessly. With inward delight he saw the virgin susceptible soil of her mind spread out before him. Happy the man to whom it might be granted some day to cultivate it with loving hands! There was an unspeakable charm in such whispering, such sitting close beside each other!

"How beautiful that is!" said the young girl, softly, when Moritz had finished. "Some parts made me feel as if I had seen something like it in our mountains here. But in Switzerland, of course, every thing is grander."

"And how true," he replied, also in a low voice, "are these descriptions! Just so have I seen the crystal-mines, the baths of the Valais."

"You have been there? You know Switzerland?"

"I visited that delightful country during a vacation while at the university."

Then he had to tell her, then she wanted to know all about it. His descriptions were apparently far more plastic and picturesque than those of Haller, to judge from the countless questions which she asked, the interest with which she listened. But gradually he grew rather absent, and Agatha cast down her eyes, she hardly knew why herself. A short pause occurred in the conversation, hitherto so lively. The book had long been closed. Suddenly Moritz opened it again, and, after turning over the leaves a while, said with a voice in which Agatha thought she discerned a slight tremor:

"Haller has written still other beautiful poems. In the elegies on his wife, whom death took from him after a brief wedded happiness, there is much deep, mournful feeling. Her name was Marianna, and he retains this name in his poems. He is the first of our poets who has taken the liberty of dropping the tasteless names of Arcadian shepherdesses which have so long been used. In one of his former poems to her, however," he continued rather more timidly, "he gives her, according to the old custom, the name of Doris, a name which, in fact, any other girl may consider as referring to herself." And he read, his full manly voice trembling slightly:

"Feel'st thou not, Doris, in thy heart,  
The tender flame, the gentle smart,  
No earthly pleasure half so sweet?  
Shine not thine eyes with softer glow?  
Doth not thy blood more swiftly flow,  
Thy guileless bosom higher beat?"

“ Could but a shadow o’er thee steal  
Of what two happy lovers feel,  
Two hearts in wedded union met,  
Then wouldst thou ask the guardian powers  
To give thee back the long, slow hours  
In which thy heart was idle yet.”

I fear my readers will think these lines very old-fashioned. They were written, indeed, more than a hundred and thirty years ago, and were probably even then not thought to be Haller’s *chef-d’œuvre*. But Agatha, who was not as familiar with poetry, or even rhymes, as the young ladies of the present day, thought the verses melodious enough, and it seemed to her as if they had been made expressly for her. She looked down, the lovely color in her cheek deepened. Moritz held the book in his right hand; his left, that was nearest to Agatha, was softly raised to clasp hers.

At that moment the duet came to a stop. Moritz seized the book with both hands. Agatha stooped to pick up her work, which had fallen from her lap. The countess started up in alarm.

“ Please to excuse, monsieur the baron,” she said, in some confusion, “ my want of *politesse*. I have been on my feet a good deal this morning. Another time you will find me a more civil listener. Come, my love,” she admonished the count, “ it is time to go to bed.”

The young people, however, slept but little that night, notwithstanding that it was time to go to bed. Both went to their rooms, happy, rapturous; it would be hard to decide which of the two was the happiest, the most rapturous. Agatha felt that she was loved;

Moritz that he was understood, and *gladly* understood. Thus some days went by. Agatha attended to her little domestic occupations, her needlework, her flowers, as usual, passing away the monotonous hours in quiet inner happiness; while Moritz was employed more outside, and, as his cure progressed rapidly, spent more and more time at the camp. One day he entered the sitting-room of the Promnitz family with a quick, firm step. His eyes sparkled, and his face indicated that he had received welcome news. A propitious fate so ordered it that Agatha happened to be sitting all alone at her work-table by the window.

He stepped up to her resolutely. "Mademoiselle," he said, while his voice betrayed his deep inward emotion, "at length I am released from playing the part of an idle looker-on, and my physician as well as my general has given me permission to feel myself a soldier once more. The latter is to leave for Steinau to-morrow with several regiments, and I am to accompany him."

Agatha had changed color. Encouraged by this, he proceeded:

"The days which Heaven has permitted me to spend under your roof, mademoiselle, have been the happiest of my life. They were to me the awakening to a new existence. Yes, even as, on awaking from the swoon caused by my loss of blood, my first glance fell into the heaven of your eyes, so I am now suddenly translated from the apathetic state of my former life to a consciousness of bliss, such as only the absorbing feeling of a fervent, glowing, eternal love can give."

He had seized her hand. She did not withdraw it.

She sat, leaning her head upon her other hand, her elbow resting upon the table. She sat silent, in joy and fear. Tear upon tear dropped from her eyes.

"Agatha," continued Moritz, "I know that I, a poor lieutenant, may not venture to lift my eyes to the countess of the empire; but I have hopes that this war will offer me the means of drawing nearer to you. If, with God's help, I should succeed in winning honor and fame, and with them a higher position, beloved, adored Agatha, may I, *may* I ask your parents for the treasure of this hand?"

Agatha started. The mention of her parents suddenly raised up difficulties and obstacles before her mind like a dark wall. Moritz only half-understood her. He drew back, but almost involuntarily she retained his hand.

"Speak, dearest Agatha!" he went on; "time presses. Let me carry that consolation with me. But I can do nothing without your permission."

She still remained silent, weeping quiet tears.

"Speak," he said, more urgently, bending toward her, so that she felt his breath. "One single word, yes or no!"

"Yes," she whispered.

Is it necessary to tell *how* the happy man expressed his grateful rapture?

And, indeed, it was high time for an answer, for the count and countess entered the room a few moments after. They received the news of Moritz's intended departure with cordial interest; and when the farewells had to be said a few hours later—for Moritz was obliged to start from the camp—there was no lack

either of warm expressions of gratitude on the part of him who had been so kindly cared for, nor of fervent and *diffuse* blessings and prayers from the worthy couple. Agatha was stunned, as it were. She hardly ventured to show the tears without which she would hardly have witnessed the departure of any man, however indifferent to her, from her house for the immediate scene of war. But Moritz looked as inexpressibly happy as if he had already accomplished the victory which, with courageous heart, he was starting forth to gain.

And Fortune smiled upon the wishes of the brave young soldier. A week later, the fame of the bloody victory at Mollwitz spread over all Europe. A dearly-bought triumph, indeed! for, of the army of the conqueror alone, two thousand five hundred corpses covered the field of battle, and three thousand wounded lay in the hospitals or in the cottages of the neighboring villages. The great Field-Marshal Schwerin was the real hero of the battle, but the hereditary Prince of Dessau, Moritz von Hohenhorst's commander, by whose side he fought, decided the victory at last, and the young man had the advantage of being able to accomplish before his eyes heroic deeds which in any other situation might not have met with the full acknowledgment which was bestowed upon them under such favorable circumstances. He was highly praised, advanced in rank, and the prospect of a decoration, which a hundred years ago was a hundred times more valuable than now, was held out to him.

Agatha, meanwhile, had lived in an intoxication of mingled anxiety and bliss. At a period where there

were no telegraphs, she could not hear any thing about the battle until all was happily over; but the thought of her beloved was at all times mixed with a secret fear, because of the danger to which he was daily and hourly exposed, even without an actual battle, which all the piety inculcated by her education could not teach her to overcome. When at length a letter from Moritz arrived, addressed to the countess, in which he mentioned his good fortune in modest terms—when she had to read this letter, from which, through all the enforced ceremoniousness of a rigid etiquette, there spoke a genuine warmth of feeling to her parents, she could hardly contain herself. It was so sudden, with such unexpected rapidity, that she saw herself brought nearer to the end which the beloved one had called up before her soul. From day to day she hoped that her mother would notice the state of agitation which she was in, the feverish restlessness in which she had lived since Moritz's departure, but so entirely foreign to the good old lady's comprehension was the state of a "carnal love," that it never entered her mind that her modest daughter, brought up in the love of a heavenly Saviour, could bear in her heart the image of an earthly man, before he had formally solicited her hand of her parents. The count came rather nearer to the matter. He asked the countess one night, while they were retiring, whether she did not think Agatha had exhibited, since Baron Hohenhorst's departure, rather more restlessness and excitement than would be likely to be caused by mere Christian pity on account of the dangers to which the young man was exposed. But the countess, in the first place, was rather vexed by



the expression, "mere Christian pity." She explained to her husband in a long speech, and in her usual not very concise manner, that Christian compassion was the warmest of all feelings. He was tired, and could have wished that he had not said any thing, so as to be able to sleep; but when she tried to prove to him, in the second place, that Christian compassion ought not to be mingled with a carnal anxiety, which ill befitted the sinner redeemed by grace and the blood of Christ, who ought to rest therein like an infant in its cradle, full of trust in God, and resignation to His will, he felt dimly that by this last argument she accepted, in reality, his own view. Being, however, fully accustomed to consider his wife wiser than himself, he readily agreed to every thing, and thus could go quietly to sleep.

The victory at Mollwitz was followed by the occupation of Breslau and the surrender of Brieg. Otherwise, however, the war was carried on only by small skirmishes, and more than a year passed before another regular battle was fought, which finally turned the scale in favor of the conqueror. The king was right in not fully trusting Saxony, although it had apparently allied itself to him. He therefore considered it advisable to keep watch of the northeastern frontier, where Polish troops were rallying. Hence the camp at Glogau, which had been broken up two weeks after the battle of Mollwitz, had to be pitched again six weeks later, and the regiment to which Moritz's company belonged, with several others, was ordered thither.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ON TO THE GOAL.

WITH the beginning of spring the Promnitz family had returned to their rural castle, where all its several members felt more at home than in town. The count went fishing and trolling in the daytime; in the evening he made up his accounts with the steward, or had Agatha read to him from Arndt's "True Christianity." The ladies, too, had returned to their old occupations, the household resumed its regular routine, the school flourished as before, and every thing was again as it had been the previous spring, the more that, to the regret of the peasants, who had profited by the presence of the soldiers, the camp had been broken up, and, with the exception of the garrison at Glogau, there were no longer any Prussian troops in the vicinity. Agatha alone was transformed, as it were. The state of her soul beamed from her eyes and ennobled her features. Love had proved a Pygmalion for her.

The family had moved out in May. Already in the beginning of June, Prussian troops again appeared in the neighborhood, and were cordially welcomed by the inhabitants. The military discipline enforced was

so strict that the count and his household were but little disturbed in their quiet life. But a circumstance occurred which soon brought them more into contact with the outer world.

The fields, which had been covered with the tents of the former camp, had been used for this purpose in winter without much injury to their owners. But now, in spring, they had been ploughed and sowed; and the hopes of support of several families rested upon them. The owners, therefore, entered a protest, and would not be satisfied with the indemnity offered to them, when they were called upon again to give up the fields on which their prosperity depended. It was known that Silesia was not to be treated as hostile territory, and great consideration was used in trying to induce the peasants to yield.

The latter applied, as in all cases of difficulty, to Count Promnitz. He talked the matter over with his wife, who made the generous proposition that, in order not to injure these poor people, and at the same time remain on good terms with the Prussian authorities, they themselves should make a sacrifice; that they should offer one of their own fields, which, on account of its stony soil, had but little value, and an adjoining meadow, as a site for the camp, and hand over the compensation to the quartermasters: for she advised her husband by no means to appear as a tradesman in this matter, but to maintain his full dignity as count of the empire. And this warning would hardly have been necessary, for Count Casimir was no less generous than she. Moreover, he was glad of an opportunity of obliging a government which he was

soon to call his own; for, after the battle of Mollwitz, no one doubted that lower Silesia at least would be yielded to Prussia when peace was concluded.

The count, therefore, immediately entered into negotiations with the officers concerned in the matter, and his proposition was accepted with polite thanks. He came into contact, on this occasion, with a Count Nastitz, who filled the rank of major, and who made the most disagreeable impression upon him; a middle-aged man of colossal build, with a dusky-red face, on which wild passions had left their mark. His comrades knew him to be a coarse, arrogant fellow; but as he was man of the world enough to hide his character, which was immoral besides, by the veil with which the customs of elegant society superficially cover even the lowest vices, the worst features of his inner man did not immediately appear before the count, except that his constant swearing, and the profane expressions with which his lips overflowed, were excessively repugnant to the former.

But, when the two gentlemen met again shortly after, Nastitz took evident pains to restrain himself also in this respect before the "pietists," and pleaded the excuse of having fallen into bad habits, hardly to be avoided in the field, which the count would probably remember from the time of his own former war experience. And for this war experience, the major manifested a special interest; envied the count for having fought under Prince Eugène of Savoy and against the Turks, and exercised so much skill in flattering the worthy old gentleman's innocent little weaknesses, that he half conciliated him. When, therefore, the

major, at the close of the interview, asked permission to pay his respects to the gracious countesses, the count did not think, as he would have thought before, that he could refuse this request without great impoliteness, and hence replied, with a stiff bow and some embarrassment, that the ladies would feel honored by the proposed visit.

The count did not know—though all the officers in the camp were aware of it—that the major had seen the lovely Agatha while riding, and in church, and that he had declared, with a thousand oaths, by which he invoked heaven and hell, that he was desperately in love with the “charming creature.” All his being in love, however, did not guard him against an icy-cold, stiff, though civil reception at Castle Wildeneck, any more than this reception guarded the ladies there against the major’s visits; for, with every visit, he found the mother, indeed, more tedious, but the daughter more lovely.

Tired of his long, dissolute bachelor-life, he had for some time been thinking of marriage; but, like many other men, none but the youngest, loveliest, and most virtuous, could satisfy him, although he himself was neither young, handsome, nor virtuous, and could offer nothing in return for such qualities in his chosen one but wealth and a position in society. Agatha charmed him, almost more than by her beauty, by her total ignorance of the world, and by that which in the “old woman” he thought excessively tedious, her piety.

He sought to win the favor of the mother by edifying conversations, by telling her about the churches

in Berlin, the great piety of the defunct king, and the much-admired sermons of Archdeacon Süßmilch, during which ladies of the highest rank were often obliged to stand for hours — without, however, mentioning that he had never attended these services except when his regiment had been under command to do so, and that Süßmilch was the only preacher in Berlin whom he knew even by name, because he happened to be the most fashionable one. But, if he had gone to work ten times more skilfully to insinuate himself into the countess's favor, he would not have succeeded; for the shrewd old lady would, under any circumstances, have recognized in him not only the hypocrite, but by his face the *roué* also, and, by the oaths which now and then escaped him, the profane child of the world. He did not, therefore, advance a single step, and, after a while, Agatha, in consequence of a welcome hint from her mother, no longer made her appearance during the calls of Major von Nastitz.

Nevertheless, passion and pride, which led him to trust in his wealth and his position, spurred him on to a written declaration, and a proposal of marriage in due form. The count, to whom he addressed himself, refused his demand, without a moment's hesitation, with icy politeness, thanking him, in his daughter's name, for the intended favor, but pronouncing her too young to think of marriage.

After this the major's calls were discontinued, and the family heard no more about him.

About this time, Moritz arrived in Rauschwitz. He had enjoyed the favor, before rejoining his regiment, of having been employed, on account of his un-

usual strategical knowledge, for some extraordinary services, on its staff. Thus the attention of the king had again been directed to him. Nor was this the first time since the battle of Mollwitz. During several skirmishes which had occurred, he had had repeated occasions for brilliantly distinguishing himself. This, too, had brought his name again and again to the king's ear. When, therefore, Moritz's commander, the hereditary Prince of Dessau, who, like some of the other officers, had formerly been wont to rally him good-naturedly upon his relations to the house of Promnitz, dismissed him, that he might rejoin his regiment in Lower Silesia, he took occasion to mention the matter to the king.

Frederick, on hearing Hohenhorst's name, observed that he intended to bestow a special reward upon this young officer for his excellent services, upon which the hereditary prince remarked, with a laugh, that his majesty could not reward him more satisfactorily than by marrying him to the young Countess Promnitz, a rich heiress in Lower Silesia, "for," he added, "the poor fellow is desperately in love with her." The king, who, as is well known, was fond of gossip in his younger days, and particularly at this time of his first advance toward fame, constantly required his correspondents to tell him "what was talked about in Berlin," and "what was the news," grew curious, and wished to know all about the matter. Marriage connections of his officers with the nobility of Silesia, which province he strove to secure to himself and his race in every way, could not but be welcome to him. Here particularly there was an opportunity of uniting one of

the highest families of Silesia with the fame of Prussian valor. True, marriages of officers during war-time were prohibited. But, in the first place, there need be only an engagement for the present; and, secondly, with the royal sanction, an exception might be made.

Thus, when Moritz presented himself before his majesty the next day, to pay his respects before leaving, the king, after giving him some official commands, asked him in French, with a slightly-roguish smile:

"I am told that you are acquainted with Count Promnitz?—a pietist, as I hear."

"I know him, sire," replied Moritz; "a perfectly honorable man, and very devoted to your majesty."

"He proved himself very *obligeant* on a recent occasion. If you will take to him this my acknowledgment of his services, you may find it a good recommendation, in case you might have a favor to ask of him."

With this the monarch handed the astonished young officer a sealed letter, dismissed him with a wave of his hand, and turned to one of his generals who stood beside him. Thus Moritz was spared the necessity of expressing his thanks, which was fortunate for him, as he could only have done so most incoherently, owing to his joyful surprise, and would have made himself ridiculous in the eyes of the bystanders. What was in the letter? What could there be in the letter? The thought that it might contain a recommendation of him as a wooer, crossed his mind, but he rejected it as quickly as it came.

"How foolish!" he said to himself. "What can the king know about the desire of my heart? What



he meant was only the general fact that the bearer of a royal letter carried his own recommendation with it. And, for that reason alone, I ought to be glad that the king chose me for this purpose. God be thanked, that His providence has given me occasion to recommend myself in person to the count, who knows how to appreciate military honors!"

Yet he could not drive the letter from his mind. He reached the camp in great uneasiness. It was evening; he stole around the outside of the castle garden, in the hope of seeing Agatha at least at a distance, of being able to give her a sign that he was near. He could not bear to think that, after so long a separation, his first meeting with her must be in the presence of her stiff, formal parents, and his longing to call the beloved one his own was increased almost to a fever. But in vain. The high hedges of yew prevented any view of the interior of the garden. The house stood in the shadow of lofty trees. It had hardly a window in front of which some branch did not make a kind of screen; and he did not even know on which side Agatha's room was situated. Late in the evening he saw the gleam of a white dress among the foliage of the linden-trees, which rose above the balcony. The question came to his mind whether he should not begin to sing; whether she would recognize his voice—but the thought that it might be the old lady of whom he had had a glimpse, or that he might expose himself to the danger of a possible flirtation with some sentimental lady's-maid, deterred him. The poor lover had at last to make up his mind to wait patiently till morning, and prepare the way

for the meeting with his loved one by a formal visit to her parents.

The morning came at length ; and as there was a royal letter to be delivered, that is, important business to be transacted, Moritz considered it his duty not to wait till noon, the ceremonious hour for calls. He entered Castle Wildeneck with a beating heart. Kerkow, the old servant of the family, received him joyfully. The gracious countess, he said, had gone to ride with the *comtesse*, but monsieur the count would be rejoiced to see monsieur the captain once more ; for not only the family, but all the servants also, had followed Moritz in thought through his campaign, and been delighted by every honorable mention of his name.

The count received him with all the warmth of which he was capable, and with a paternal embrace. He congratulated him upon such a distinguished beginning of his active military career, and prophesied a future general in him. It can be easily imagined that this reception encouraged Moritz, and that he was in a measure consoled for Agatha's absence, by hearing her father regret repeatedly that mother and daughter, who would be enchanted to see him again, had just driven out to visit some sick persons in one of the neighboring villages.

At length it was the latest time to deliver his majesty's letter. The count received it with unfeigned astonishment. While he opened and read it, Moritz stepped to the window, and looked down into the garden. He stood there, troubled in mind, and waiting for the count to give him a sign when he should have finished the letter.

But, as the count remained silent, he at length turned toward him again. To his amazement, he saw the old gentleman sitting in his arm-chair with a cold, solemn, totally transformed mien, the king's letter in his hand. The young man's dismay increased when the other rose with stiff dignity, made him a deep, ceremonious bow, and said :

"I shall have the honor of letting monsieur the baron know when madame the countess will be in readiness to receive monsieur the baron."

Moritz could hardly trust his ears, his eyes. But a second formal obeisance from the count left him no choice. He was forced to respond to it with a bow of at least equal depth, and in this manner saw himself, without being able to utter a word, politely bowed out of the room, and, as the servants outside threw open the doors before him, out of the house, ere he had time to collect himself.

He was beside himself with indignation and grief. "What does this mean?" he asked; "what can the king's letter have contained that could possibly have had such an effect? What can I have done to have occasioned it? And, now, what must I do? What remains to me but to wait for an invitation? And just now, when the conditions are fulfilled, on which alone I myself asked Agatha's permission to demand her hand!"

He spent the day in the most burning anxiety. Fortunately, the entering upon his new position, as captain of a company, gave him ample occupation. But at evening he could bear it no longer. No message from Wildeneck had come. His anxiety drove

him from the house. He intended to prowl about the castle, as he did the night before; perhaps make his way into the garden, in the hope of being more fortunate than yesterday, of possibly seeing the darling girl, of letting her know that he was there. He walked on at the top of his speed; but suddenly he stopped. "No!" he cried; "I will not entice the pure mind of the dear child, who has been brought up to obedience and filial submission, to any secrecy. I have nothing to conceal; I will act openly, as becomes a man of honor. I must clear up this matter; I will write this very evening. The count must explain his behavior. The time has come when it is no longer too great a presumption to ask for my darling's hand, when her heart is already mine."

He returned home, seated himself at his desk, and found means, in spite of the stiff ceremoniousness required by the epistolary style of the day—in which all warmer expressions of feeling were in danger of being suffocated by a swaddling-band of such expressions as "your high-born worship," the "count's grace," "having the honor," "remaining till death," etc.—to put his fervent, faithful, adoring love for Agatha into impressive words. He explained his position, his prospects, his advantages, through the distinctly-expressed favor of the king, in modest and respectful terms; and only hinted at his surprise at the count's altered manner, without alluding to the possibility of its having been caused by the king's letter. For, on mature reflection, he had entirely discarded this idea, and quite convinced himself that Frederick could not have written him a letter such as David gave to Uriah.

It had grown too late to send the letter that evening. He knew that the venerable couple had some difficulty in reading writing by candle-light, and could suppose that they would hardly think proper to have this letter first communicated to them by Agatha's fair lips.

The count, on Moritz's departure, had awaited the return of his ladies with some impatience. When he heard the carriage, he immediately sent his valet to beg the countess to come to his room without delay.

"I trust that your father may not be unwell," said the old lady to Agatha, as Kerkow helped her out of the carriage, and she went to join her husband immediately.

The old servant now held out his supporting arm to his young mistress, and said, smiling as much as respect would permit :

"Monsieur the Captain von Hohenhorst has arrived in camp, gracious *comtesse*."

Agatha's beaming eyes, and the color which overspread her face, thanked him for his news quite as expressively as her lips could have done. He followed her up the stairs, smiling gleefully to himself, with the intention of telling her that "monsieur the baron had already called himself, and how well and strong he was looking ;" for his long, faithful services had won for him the privilege of sometimes beginning a conversation, and he loved Agatha particularly, whom he had seen grow up from her cradle, with paternal affection—only that fathers have not the thousandth part as much humble respect for their daughters as he felt for his high-born young lady.

But Agatha, feeling the need of being alone with her overwhelming feelings, ran up before him to her room. At the door she only turned to him with the question, "I hope all is well with my father, my good Kerkow?" and, satisfied with the affirmative answer which she received, she slipped into the room. Thus she did not even learn that her lover had already paid his respects to her father.

Meanwhile the countess had entered her husband's room. He received her with the words: "I have the strangest affair to communicate to you, my love, that has ever happened to me."

"I observe," replied the countess, full of interest, "that monsieur the count has received a letter. May the dear Saviour grant that it be no Job's message! but if it should be the will of the most High to chasten you, and me with you, we will endeavor to bear the infliction with humility."

"On the contrary," was the count's answer—as he pushed an arm-chair toward his wife, and seated himself beside her—"on the contrary, it is a very gracious letter from the King of Prussia, a letter which many a Silesian cavalier would look upon as an eminent *flat-ter*ie and *faveur*. Read it, my love."

The countess put on her spectacles, and read with the utmost surprise the following lines:

"MY DEAR COUNT PROMNITZ:

"I have learned with *satisfaction* that you have proved yourself very *obligeant* in the accommodation of my troops in the county of Glogau, and shall gladly take the first occasion that offers to prove to you

my gratitude. I send you this through Captain Baron von Hohenhorst, a very brave officer, and a cavalier of the highest nobility, whom I hereby recommend to you as a son-in-law, having heard that you have a fair and virtuous daughter. I remain

“Your well-affectioned king,

“FREDERICK.”

“Well, what do you say to that letter, my love?” inquired the old gentleman.

“Has Baron Hohenhorst solicited the hand of our daughter?” asked the countess, after a pause.

“By no means. He was here himself this morning, while you were out, and brought me this letter. But he made no offer of marriage, and Agatha’s name was not mentioned.

“And what is here, honored sir, in this most gracious letter, that has so embarrassed, and, if I am not quite mistaken, so irritated you?”

The count was silent a while. “I am not the subject of the King of Prussia,” he at length said, in a tone of annoyance. “He has no right to lay commands upon me. I am a count of the Holy Roman Empire, and none but his majesty the emperor has a word to say to me.”

“You are not now a subject of the King of Prussia; but, as a Silesian landed proprietor, you will soon be one; for, since the great *bataille* in April, it is, as you are yourself aware, honored sir, against all *probabilité* that the queen should be able to conclude a treaty of peace without yielding up to this young king, whom the providence of the most High seems to have chosen

to be the earthly protector of the oppressed evangelical Christians of Germany, at least a few counties, in which all your estates are situated, my love."

"Well," said the count, "even if I should become his subject, I do not wish to have my *affaires de famille* interfered with by either king or emperor. No one has a right to command me to whom to give my daughter."

"You forget, my love, if you will kindly permit me to say so, that this letter of the king contains no command, but only a *recommendation*. I find myself induced, however, my dear sir, to remind you of the far more arbitrary manner in which the imperial government interfered with your *affaires de famille* about twenty years ago, when madame, your grand-aunt, the Duchess of Saxe-Dahme, after she had already snatched her young grand-daughter from the jaws of the devil, as it were, by an abduction, was forced by imperial command to give the unfortunate *comtesse* up again, and to let her be ruined, body and soul. You know, my love, that the wicked and ungodly Countess Kallenberg-Tenczin, when your cousin, her daughter, was placed under the protection of the duchess her grandmother, yielded up her maternal rights to the empress, and that that princess, who herself had bought the imperial crown with the salvation of her soul, claimed the young *comtesse*, with the threat of a fine of eighteen thousand ducats in the case of her being withheld. You will remember, too, that, as pious Count Erdmann in Sorau was utterly unable to raise such a sum, the unhappy young lady was taken to Vienna, placed in a convent, and forced to renounce the Lutheran religion,



and give her hand in marriage to a papist noble. Now compare, if I may request you to do so, my dear sir, this style of interference with that of this Protestant king, who is himself still under the law, indeed, but who yet declares himself willing to protect the little flock of Christ from all oppression."

The count was somewhat stunned by the eloquence of his lady, and had lost the thread of his own thoughts. The wound which the short, pithy tone of the king had inflicted upon his pride, as count of the empire, was already beginning to heal under the gentle hands of the countess, when he saw that she looked upon the matter in a different light.

"Would an *alliance de mariage* between our only child and a Prussian officer have your sanction, then, my love?" he asked, somewhat abashed.

"Monsieur the count will kindly allow me to remark that in reality there is not yet any question of such an event, since Baron Hohenhorst has not yet applied to us for Agatha's hand; but if you wish to know my opinion on the subject, my love, I would take the liberty of observing that the fact of his being an officer should not deter us. It is true, indeed, that war is a terrible, unchristian evil; but the Lord has awakened faith also in warriors. The centurion of Capernaum was full of a faith such as our Lord declared He had not found in all Israel; and Cornelius, the centurion of the Italian band, was he not even chosen of the Lord to receive a divine revelation? The present day, too, furnishes examples of pious officers, as we ourselves know by experience in several instances; Field-Marshal von Arnim, General Natzmer, the step-father of our

beloved *ordinarius*,\* General Wutgenau, whom we ourselves entertained at this our own house a few years ago, when it was our privilege to offer up prayers in common with him to the crowned Lamb. In my own family, too—”

Here the count, who had long been expecting, with some degree of modest confusion, that his own ten years of war-life would at length have their turn in being mentioned, interrupted his wife, not without some irritation. He did not, indeed, lay claim to having conducted himself precisely like a saint during that time; but he had bravely withstood all temptations of going over to the Catholic Church, and had thus, as it were, become a martyr to Lutheranism, through being neglected in the service, and resigning in consequence.

“*Ma chère*,” he said, “I do not doubt in the least, nor does any one in his senses doubt, that there are God-fearing individuals in every condition of life. But, as far as I know, a man must have something besides piety to make him fit to be our son-in-law.”

The countess, who noticed immediately that she had made a mistake, changed her course at once. “Excuse me, honored sir,” she said, “for mentioning that first which is most important to both of us. But you were the first to express to me the opinion that the baron is an excellent and amiable young man, and thoroughly qualified to insure the happiness of a modest and religiously-brought-up young lady. With the high respect which I have always entertained for your knowledge of human nature, your judgment has had no small influence on my own. I would not convey

\* An ecclesiastical dignity of that day.

by this that I would already count him among those who are freed from all earthly bonds ; but it seems to me as if his Christian education had prepared him sufficiently, that he might, if he marries into a God-fearing family, such as, without spiritual pride, I may call our own, gradually cast off those bonds, and thus become one with Jesus. But I would not forestall in this the judgment of my respected husband."

"You are quite right," rejoined the count. "And there is nothing to be said against his title. He is not rich, but that does not matter to us ; we have enough for our only child."

" 'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches,' saith the wise Solomon," replied the countess, "and the prophet Jeremiah hath it : 'Let not the rich man glory in his riches, but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord.'"

"In case the offer is made, then," observed the count, after some reflection, "all that we have to do is to learn whether Agatha likes him or not. And *quant à cela*," he added, smiling, "you are already aware of my opinion on the matter."

And perhaps the count would have remained exempt from listening to a new dissertation from his lady's lips on the incompatibility of "carnal love" and "creature delight" with the true love of Christ, could she have watched her pious little daughter as she appeared in her room at this moment.

The dear child, after bolting the door behind her, had sunk upon a chair, breaking out into tears of joy. "He has come !" she cried in transport, clapping her

hands, "he has come!" But it was only for a moment that she gave way to this joy without thinking of the Author of all joys. Gratitude to God, even for the slightest pleasure granted to her, had, through her education, become so habitual to her, that a want of her heart seemed unfulfilled if outward obstacles, for instance the presence of strangers, prevented her from giving audible expression to her thanks. For every present which she received, for every useful undertaking in which she succeeded, she had been taught to thank, not only the earthly giver of the former or promoter of the latter, but also the Saviour, on her knees. The count, who had long since become resigned to the fact that his wife had the precedence of him, as well in piety as in wisdom, was soon forced to observe that his young daughter, too, exceeded him in kneeling devotion; but was wont to excuse himself quite seriously by pleading that the cause of his being behindhand in piety lay in his increasing corpulence, which made it difficult for him to kneel.

On this occasion, Agatha was led to God by an overwhelming feeling of grateful happiness. Altogether, the anxiety which she had experienced on Moritz's account, since his departure for the scene of war, had been very much modified by an indescribable inner feeling of rapture, as well as by her implicit confidence that the kind heavenly Father would direct all for the best. Had she wept much since her separation from her lover, had she been low-spirited, and grown pale and thin, her affectionate mother would perhaps have felt more inclined to believe in her modest daughter's "creature love." But seeing her constantly in a

state of inner joyful exaltation, her eyes brighter, her cheeks more rosy than ever, her walk more elastic, all her movements more resolute—these were symptoms for the recognition of which the countess, with all her maternal affection, was not prepared.

Agatha, as we have hinted above, had been awakened by love to a new life. Moritz had met her “at the entrance of this world,”\* and, though she could not express it as beautifully as Thekla, love had borne her too to “life’s lofty summit.” An unknown world lay before her, bathed in sunshine, for *her* first glance had also fallen into the heart of the beloved one. All the afternoon she hoped that he would come; but she was not cast down when he did not appear. “His duties as an officer,” she told herself, “keep him away; he will certainly come to-morrow.” She was in constant expectation of hearing her parents mention him and his arrival. “Strange,” she thought, “that Kerkow has not told them of his return!” Twice, thrice, she tried to broach the subject, but the hot blood which rushed to her face each time warned her against the attempt. She could not muster the courage to speak.

Early the next morning a letter was handed to the count. But no letter was ever opened until morning prayers were over. At breakfast the count opened the document, looked at the signature, and made a sign to the countess. “You need not wait for us, my daughter,” said the latter, “in case you would like to attend to your flowers.” Agatha thought to herself,

\* “Thou metst me at the entrance of this world.”—*Schiller's Wallenstein*.

"A business letter!"—rose, made a respectful courtesy, and left the room.

"Here we have the marriage-offer," said the count, as soon as they were alone. A letter so frank, honest, and full of deep feeling, as that of Moritz, could not make any but a good impression, and its effect was all the more favorable, that the writer's worldly wisdom had caused him intentionally to retain the humble, over-respectful style of the period, which his own taste had already outgrown. Both parents read the letter with emotion, and agreed that, as far as Moritz's person was concerned, no son-in-law could have pleased them better. Agatha was called back to the room.

Just as she stood before them now, she had stood only four or five days before, when they had summoned her to communicate to her the offer of Count Nastitz, only that then the answer had been decided beforehand, while now the acceptance or refusal was to be left to her.

The count, with the letter in his hand, commenced, with a smile: "My child, I am inclined to find it quite '*incommode*' to be the father of a marriageable daughter. A few days ago, I sent away one wooer, and now another has made his appearance. What do you think, my dear—should you like to be married?"

"Dear papa," replied Agatha, without a moment's hesitation, "I repeat what I told you at that time, I have not the slightest desire to be married."

"That was quite a different matter," said the countess. "Count Nastitz is a wicked, ungodly son of Anak, with whom we never should have allowed our daughter to contract a *mariage*, even if she had had an *in-*

*clination* for him, which was of course out of the question in the case of an honorable young lady like yourself, my child. But this time it is a Christian cavalier who solicits your hand—a young man brought up in the fear of God, a marriage with whom will not harm you either in body or soul.”

“And besides this,” added the count, “he is recommended by his king, which is by no means an indifferent matter.”

“Dearest papa,” replied Agatha, not without some uneasiness at seeing her parents so much in favor of the new wooer, “dear, gracious mamma, do not persuade me to accept this offer. I would rather remain single for the present. I do not know why I should leave you for a strange man, however excellent he may be. I am so happy here with you, why should I marry already? I am sure you would miss me a little.”

“That we would, indeed; but we are thinking chiefly of your happiness, my daughter, and shall find our own in that. And you know, too, that marriage is woman’s vocation.”

“But not such early marriage, gracious mamma! Believe me, I am entirely too young and too ignorant to be married.”

“You are no longer a child.”

“But I am so happy here.”

Thus the matter proceeded for a while, until the count said:

“Well, then, I shall give Baron Hohenhorst the same answer which I gave Count Nastitz, that you are too—”

Agatha stood speechless on hearing the wooer’s

name. "How!" she at length interrupted her father in almost a whisper, "is that letter from Baron Hohenhorst?"

The count suddenly put on a comically-shrewd face. "Well?" he asked.

Agatha was silent. Her cheeks burned. Her slender frame trembled. But after a pause she said, with a firm voice:

"Decide as you will, gracious papa, but allow me to say this *one* thing, that I shall never, *never* in my life, give my hand to any *other* man."

The count looked at the countess, and when he saw the utterly-astonished expression with which she gazed upon her daughter, who suddenly appeared like another creature, he broke out into a fit of such inextinguishable laughter that it made him feel his corpulence almost as much as kneeling in prayer. The countess looked at him with some displeasure, but Agatha suddenly threw her arms around his neck, first hiding her burning face upon his shoulder, and then began to kiss and fondle him, while she whispered: "Dearest, best papa, you know what I mean!" Then she ran to her mother, knelt down before her, covered her hands with kisses, and said in a caressing tone: "Dear, darling mamma, did you not say yourself that he was one of the best young men you had ever seen? And did you not even once say that you loved him like a son?"

"That is true, my child," answered the countess, with a smile; but, she added, somewhat suspiciously, "tell me who had communicated to you that Baron Hohenhorst desired to have you for his wife?"



"Why, gracious mamma," replied Agatha, with perfect ingenuousness, "he told me so himself. Oh, pray do not be displeased, dearest mamma, it was only the day before he left us. And he asked me," she added, blushing deeply, "whether he might ask you for my hand, and I said yes."

At this the count shook anew with laughter. It was evident that his little victory over his wife had put him in the best humor. The countess was too kind and too amiable not to suffer him to enjoy it, and submitted, smilingly, and without showing any annoyance, to his jokes on the subject; nor could the happiness which shone from the daughter's lovely eyes fail to cast its reflection also on the affectionate mother.

"Dearest husband," said the old lady, after a pause, "let us not be over-hasty in this important matter. As far as human wisdom can determine, this marriage seems *convenable*. Captain von Hohenhorst is a young man of Christian principles; he is of good family; as a soldier he has won a good name and the approbation of his king; lastly, and what is of great weight in the scale, our daughter has, as it seems, the confidence in him that, with the help of God, he will make her happy. But it would leave a stain on my conscience, and certainly also on yours, my honored husband, if we decided an *affaire* of such importance solely according to our own judgment. For you know that 'the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.' We will let the sacred Word of God itself determine what answer we are to give the young man."

The count looked at Agatha rather anxiously; but when he saw his fair daughter quite easy, full of trust

that God would decide in favor of her and her innocent love, through which she felt all the nearer to him, he also took courage, and declared himself of the countess's opinion.

Agatha now fetched the great family Bible, which was used chiefly for such oracles. As she laid it on the table before her father, she could not, after all, help trembling a little. Hardly conscious why she did so, she chose her father rather than her mother, perhaps because she considered him as being more decidedly on her side, or it might be because her mother had accustomed her to give him the preference in all outward things.

The count uttered a short, low prayer, and then, with nervous haste, pushed his left thumb between the leaves. He opened to Jeremiah xiii. 16 :

“Give glory to the Lord your God, before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, He turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.”

The count looked embarrassed, and sought the eyes of his wife, which were turned upon the ground for some time. But when she raised them, they expressed joyful gratitude.

“Praised be the Lord !” she said to her husband and to Agatha, who was somewhat dismayed. “Could the Lord have given a more beautiful answer to our humble question? Only we poor worms of the earth must not expect that He will order every thing according to our human wisdom, for, as Paul tells us, ‘God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world.’ Thus we are not to take these blessed words as an

answer to the question whether we shall give our child to monsieur the captain; but the Most High teaches us by them to perceive that we chose the right way, when we concluded to leave the decision of this question to the Holy Scriptures. Give glory to the Lord! This we do, O Lord, we, thy faithful servant and thy humble handmaidens. Let us, beloved in Christ, do according to His word, and be careful to look for light when He leads us to the dark mountains and makes gross darkness.

"And now, my dear ones," she continued, "when both her hearers remained devoutly silent, let us ask the decisive question."

She seated herself at the table, opposite her husband. The Bible was placed before her. Agatha's heart beat high. Her mother inserted her right thumb between the leaves, while she uttered a silent prayer.

Then she opened the book, and read: "This is the thing which the Lord doth command concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying, Let them marry to whom they think best; only to the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry."

"The Lord hath decided," she said, with emotion. Agatha threw herself into her arms.

"But what is that about the 'family of the tribe of their father?'" asked the count, somewhat dubiously.

"That," explained the countess, "refers only to the people of Israel, which is under the law, the bonds of which the Saviour of the world has broken. It may be that it is intended for the scions of a Christian nobility, the entire race of the Christian order of nobility."

## CHAPTER VII.

### A T H U N D E R - B O L T .

It is unnecessary to relate in detail how a messenger was sent to the camp, and Captain Baron von Hohenhorst was respectfully requested to take the trouble of repairing to Castle Wildeneck in person; how the happy man hastened thither; how he obtained the formal consent of Agatha's parents, and permission was granted the young couple to salute each other in their presence, and how they obeyed; how the lover longed for the moment when he should be left alone with his loved one, and the latter did not regret it when that moment at last arrived—it is unnecessary to relate all this in detail, I repeat, because each one of us has either had similar experiences himself or witnessed them in others, though with this difference, that such a family picture of a hundred and twenty years ago has to our fastidious eyes a somewhat old-fashioned, faded coloring. Yet it is remarkable that our painters choose, for their domestic scenes from high life, the more stately attire and the more picturesque style of our forefathers, in preference to the tight-fitting garments of our parents, who fancied that they

were thereby brought nearer to Nature, or the fashionable dress of our present day, which strives to unite in itself the contradictions of the different periods of the past, or even to recall their least pleasing features. And might not the same be the case sometimes with the soul-painter? Might he not find it more attractive to delineate hidden emotions, half-veiled by outward forms, to dissect psychologically the heart-features, never brought to open consciousness of men and women of deep feeling, indeed, but held in curb outwardly by the restraint of ceremonious decorum, than to depict the openly-expressed passions, the unrestricted heart-revelations which are authorized in both sexes by the greater freedom of manner and thought of the present day!

A few days later the formal betrothal of the lovers took place. The betrothal was, a hundred years ago, and long after, a ceremony almost as formal and binding as that of marriage. Like the latter, it was generally performed in the presence of witnesses, only that the *festive* celebration of a wedding was wanting, which, in pietistic families, however, had lost a great part of its original noisy character, through the banishment of music and dancing. The influence of the war naturally made the "quiet in the land," even though in Silesia they thanked God for their deliverance, more quiet than ever. The only witnesses invited, therefore, as the Counts of Promnitz in Sorau as well as in Halbau were absent from home, and the relations of the countess lived at too great a distance, were the clergyman of the parish, and the colonel of the regiment to which Moritz now belonged, and the

ceremony was performed with all the tedious formality which the period demanded.

The same can be said of the marriage, which took place six weeks later, only that on this occasion all the relations of the family, from far and near, and even Moritz's maternal uncle, Knight-Marshal von Kaiserling, his only near relative, were invited. At the time of the betrothal, no one had thought of the possibility of such a speedy marriage. But it was hastened by circumstances. Moritz lived in camp, but visited the castle daily—without, however, thus coming into a much closer relation to his beloved; for he saw her alone but rarely, and it could not be ignored, and, now that her eyes were opened, was particularly obvious to the countess, that both the young people were inwardly in great excitement. She often shook her head, as she secretly watched her daughter, and could not conceal from herself that this condition could be but little conducive to a state of quiet inner contemplation, and that her relations to her earthly lover were in danger of infringing upon those to her heavenly Bridegroom.

At length she herself came to the conclusion that it would be better to hasten the wedding, and, instead of deferring it, as was the first intention, until after the conclusion of peace, to marry the young people without delay, in case the king's consent would be obtained. Moritz said the countess could then live with them at the castle; the *intimité* would restore calm to these young hearts. The parents would thus be able to keep their daughter quite as long as if she still remained single. And if Moritz should be put

under marching orders, and be wounded in a *bataille*, Agatha, as his wedded wife, would have the better right to go to him and nurse him.

The count agreed with his wife, and the consent of the king was secured by making use of the wish he had expressed, of obliging the count in return for "his *obligeant* behavior" toward him, in obtaining it. That the lovers had no objections to make, is a matter of course.

Moritz now removed to the castle. He was obliged to be in camp at an early hour in the morning, and could only return at evening. But just these evening hours spent alone with Agatha—for their venerated parents always retired by half-past eight, or still earlier—became a source of inexpressible happiness to the young couple. Agatha's mind was undeveloped. The narrow-minded education which had deadened it had bound her with fetters which were not to be loosed in one day, but the links of the chain became elastic under Moritz's careful hands. As he had taught her to love, so he now taught her to think. She was *his* creature. He was indescribably happy, and yet not happier than she.

Moritz, by the legal marriage-contract, had made his wife joint possessor of his whole property, which was, however, quite small; in return, the count had agreed to bestow on his daughter, besides an ample dowry, an annuity of fifteen hundred thalers, which annuity was to be raised as the family increased. Moritz's little capital, together with his pay as captain, gave him an income of about the same sum. With three thousand thalers a year, our young

couple could, in the middle of the last century, live quite conformably to their station in Berlin, where Moritz's regiment was in garrison.

He often looked forward joyfully to spending the winters there with his young wife, far from the tumult of the fashionable world, in social intercourse with but a small circle of cultivated people, such as at that time were particularly to be found among the descendants of the Huguenot immigrants, in whom French and German blood were already beginning to mingle. The summers, according to the marriage-contract, Agatha was to spend regularly with her parents, until her family should have grown too large. And to this, too, Moritz looked forward without annoyance; for the venerable couple had become very dear to him, even though he was frequently obliged to suppress a yawn in his conversations with his father-in-law, and the countess's long speeches often made him wish that the good old lady, well versed in the Bible as she was, might remember the proverb of Solomon: "He that hath knowledge, spareth his words."

Public events, too, had during this time taken a course which seemed especially ordered by a kind Providence for increasing the happiness of the young couple. The petty war by which the conqueror maintained his position in Silesia during the summer and autumn, did not call for the services of the troops stationed in the county of Glogau, as no enemy showed himself there. Moritz had too much confidence in the warlike spirit of his king, not to cherish the hope that he would still have occasion, at some



future day, to win new laurels, and enjoyed his peaceful happiness with a full heart. After the battle of Mollwitz, France and England had sent ambassadors to Frederick's camp, and the British minister, Lord Hyndford, was making efforts to bring about a compromise, and induce the young queen, whose pride had been most deeply injured, to make the necessary sacrifices. After the mysterious interview at Gross-Schnellendorf, therefore, peace seemed near, and the family at Wildeneck thought themselves entitled to cherish the fairest hopes.

But the truth which every thinking person has experienced again and again in his own life and that of those around him, that "the Lord's thoughts are not as our thoughts, and his ways not our ways," was soon to be brought home, in overwhelming force, to this happy group.

It was on a lovely morning in the latter half of October—the lovers had been married somewhat over two months—that Moritz was making himself ready, as usual, to go to the camp. The last moments were generally devoted to a final farewell in the private room of the young couple. Their caresses, which no curious eye was to witness, might have sufficed for a whole month. Then Agatha would hang upon her husband's arm, and accompany him down the stairs, and through the castle garden to the outer gate. One more hurried kiss, a renewed clasp of the hand, and he would hasten down the hill. She would remain in the gate as long as she could see him, and then saunter slowly back between the green walls of yew, to her flower-beds, or her other occupations. Her in-

struction in the school had been given up since her marriage, and her place supplied by a hired teacher.

On the morning in question, Agatha was in a peculiarly tender and loving mood. She clung to her husband's neck. It seemed as if there was something on her mind. As a certain awe of his mental superiority was still wont at times to deprive her of her natural ease in his presence, he took but little notice of her manner, and only redoubled his caresses. She was silent, as she walked through the garden leaning on his arm. "I will tell him this evening," she thought. She had a blissful secret to disclose to him, which her mother had already drawn from her by questions. "I will tell him to-night, when I am sitting on his knee, which the dear man calls my throne!" The thought filled her with deep happiness. But *that* evening never came. The unhappy young wife was not to see her husband again!

What a terrible thunder-bolt fell upon the family at Wildeneck from an apparently clear, cloudless sky, we have already learned from Moritz's letter. About noon, when dinner had just been announced, Kerkow entered the dining-room with a pale face, and dismayed countenance, and requested monsieur the count to take the trouble to come out into the hall. A messenger had come in breathless haste from the village to the castle with the news, which spread like wild-fire, and grew with each repetition, that "Captain von Hohenhorst had killed Major von Nastitz, and was in prison." The count, much alarmed, managed to find out, from other villagers who came up, bringing intelligence which was in fact the same, and yet different,

that the case, though bad, was not as bad as was at first represented. But one thing was certain: blood had been shed, and his son-in-law was arrested. He ordered the carriage to be got ready, and returned to the ladies. He intended to ask them, in an indifferent tone, to eat their dinner quietly without him; that business called him to the camp. But he was little accustomed to dissemble, and his wife and daughter could easily see that something uncommon had happened.

A few urgent questions, and all was told. The count went to the camp, saw Moritz's friends and adversaries, also the chief officer in command; but he was not allowed an interview with Moritz himself. From sundry, varying representations, he could about judge of the true state of the case. The major had received a sword-thrust in the left shoulder, and the terrible rage in which he was, threatened to increase the danger of the wound. He raved and swore, and would hardly suffer the bandage to remain in its place even, as the younger officers declared, who, without exception, sided with Moritz, in order to aggravate the prisoner's fault by its serious consequences. Many knew that the major had formerly paid his addresses to the young countess, and that he had revenged himself on his more fortunate rival for this and other preferences which had been shown him, by secretly annoying him in every possible way. Nor were his violent, malignant disposition and his coarse brutality unknown to the younger officers or those of the staff. No wonder, therefore, that the count found the general opinion very much in favor of Moritz, notwith-

standing that all were deeply concerned about the inevitable consequences of his rash act.

"An affair of honor," said the count to himself, when he was again seated in the carriage, "ought to have been arranged differently. But if the scoundrel, as his comrades testify, refused him satisfaction out of sheer malice, what was left to the poor fellow, as a cavalier, but to strike the coward in the face?" It seemed to the old gentleman, indeed, that his lady would look at the matter in a very different light, and that cavalier laws were directly opposed to those of the Saviour. But, like many other pious cavaliers, he had long since ceased to trouble his mind about this incongruity, and, in spite of a depressing consciousness of the sinfulness of the whole human race, had always upheld the bloodiest laws of honor existing among the nobility.

He reached home much discouraged, and found mother and daughter in deep grief, the latter full of an overpowering anxiety, the former in a state of composure which indicated a complete resignation to the will of God.

"Oh!" she cried, "how truly doth the preacher say: 'Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry, for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.' But far be it from me to cast a stone upon our poor son. We all, we all have sinned! We were too happy in carnal happiness, and forgot the Lord in vain schemes and earthly hopes. He is a jealous God! Oh, my dear ones, let us entreat our precious Mediator to teach us how to appease the wrath of the Lord! Let us pray!"

But she was ready not merely to pray. The count

had heard that Moritz was to be sent to the fortress the next morning at an early hour, there to await the sentence of the court-martial. She promised her daughter to go with her in the carriage to the turn-pike on the morrow, there to wait for his passing, so that they might at any rate see him once more, and say a few words of loving comfort to the unhappy man, in case that they should be refused admittance to the fortress before his sentence had been pronounced.

Agatha did not in the least imagine that that sentence would be any thing beyond confinement in a fortress, and in her inmost heart still hoped for the king's pardon. Her parents, however, knew but too well that the penalty of Moritz's offence was *death*; but they had not the courage to tell their daughter of it. They, too, found great consolation in the hope of the royal clemency.

Thus the day and night passed in weeping and praying, hoping and fearing, till the early morning brought them a new agitating intelligence. The beloved criminal had fled! The count broke out into a fit of violent anger, and his wife could hardly pacify him by gentle words, sensible remonstrances, and a flood of Bible-verses, by which she finally quenched the flame which was constantly blazing up again.

For the countess saw this step in a different light, and while Agatha thanked the Saviour on her knees, and entreated Him to take the beloved fugitive under His omnipotent protection, she collected countless examples, pleasing in the sight of God, for the justification of her son-in-law.

“Did not David, too, flee from his persecutor? And Moses from the wrath of Pharaoh, when he had slain the Egyptian? And you will remember, my love, that an angel of the Lord Himself opened the prison-doors for the apostles. But I am well aware that the Lord no longer vouchsafes miracles to the sinful race of man. But, if St. Paul was permitted to escape from the Jews by being let down by the wall in a basket, why should not our son-in-law, who only raised his sword in self-defence, have escaped in a similar manner? Only that, *en effet*, his flight truly seems like a miracle of God, because no human wisdom can discover by what means it was accomplished. Neither door nor window has been opened! If we could venture to believe in a direct divine agency in this case, we might hope that he had been chosen to be, at some future day, a peculiar instrument of the Lord!”

The count suffered himself to be quieted, and in the end thanked God as fervently as any one that the poor boy was safe, when the court-martial pronounced its terrible sentence, and condemned the unfortunate young man, who had lifted his hand and sword against his superior, not to confinement in a fortress, but to *death*. The officers of Moritz's regiment had resolved, immediately after the deed, to send to the king, simultaneously with the sentence of the offender, an urgent petition for clemency. But his flight, which created great consternation in the camp, made this step unadvisable; the more so, since its originators themselves had every reason to look forward to severe censure.

Blow upon blow fell upon the deeply-afflicted fam-

ily of Wildeneck. The king was in the highest degree incensed at such an offence at a time when, in his opinion, all private passions ought to be submerged in his own far more important business. Doubly irritated by the circumstance that he had, but a short time before, overwhelmed the criminal with favors and most exceptional privileges, he added to the sentence of death, "because the offender had withdrawn from it by ignominious flight," that of being previously cashiered and deprived of his title; and neither the intercession of Moritz's princely patron, Leopold of Dessau, nor the humble petitions of all the branches of the house of Promnitz, could induce him to revoke his harsh degree.

In Count Promnitz, Moritz's deprivation of his title particularly awakened a certain bitterness toward the Prussian rule. His pride, as count of the empire, was roused anew. He, like Moritz, refused to acknowledge the king's right to such a step, to which, at the most, the emperor alone was entitled. The countess thought as he did, otherwise each aggravation of Moritz's misfortune only increased her loving pity for him, and, if possible, her tenderness for her daughter. Agatha herself was stunned, as it were. She could hardly feel deeper grief for any thing that might befall her husband than she had experienced through her separation from him. "If I could only hear from him!" she sighed. "If I only knew that he was safe!" The letter from Kalisch had never reached her; and the persons who aided the young officer's escape had thought best, from fear of discovery, to preserve an inviolable silence.

Major von Nastitz reaped no benefit from the severe punishment of the opponent whom he had so maliciously incited to anger. After he had recovered from his wound, which was not for some time, as his blood was bad, and his passionate temper made all wounds doubly dangerous for him, his comrades plainly manifested a spirit of hostility and contempt toward him. The more moderate among them avoided him; all treated him in a cold and repellent manner; some even went so far as to declare their unwillingness to serve with him any longer, on account of the dishonoring blow in the face which he had received. As, by the arbitrary and contradictory code of cavalier honor, he could not wash off the stain even by a few duels, he was at length forced to resign, and there was not one among the officers who was not glad to see him leave, as his coarse and intemperate habits threatened to give the regiment a bad reputation. For the soldiers particularly his withdrawal was an occasion of great rejoicing. He departed, boiling with rage, and swearing to take vengeance on the quiet family at Wildeneck. Shortly after, it was said that he had entered the Austrian service, and incorporated with a regiment stationed in Croatia.

I have, however, anticipated events in mentioning the withdrawal of the major from the Prussian army, which did not take place till some time later. For Agatha the unhappy man, ever since his quarrel with her husband, was an object of horror. It so happened that she met him one day, about two months after Moritz's flight, while riding with her mother. The tall, athletic figure suddenly appeared close to the carriage-



door, its coarse, angry face blanched by illness, and its wild eyes turned wrathfully upon her. After that she often saw him in her dreams, and would start from her sleep with a cry of terror, and exclaim: "Moritz, my Moritz, save me!" Time alone could gradually soften the impression.

Seven weeks after her separation from her beloved husband, she received the letter, the joy caused by which I have already described.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### AGATHA'S JOURNEY.

THIS letter had gratefully cleared the heavy atmosphere which had hung over Castle Wildeneck since that unhappy October morning. True, every thing had gone on there in the old course, and outwardly the prolonged family devotions, and the quiet, speechless melancholy of the young wife, were almost the only indications that all her earthly happiness was destroyed. The countess, in her fervent piety, was so firmly convinced that all afflictions which God sends to Christians in this world are compensated for to them in the next, and that the breaking of every earthly tie draws closer that which binds us to heaven, that she was in reality never happier than in misfortune. The count, indeed, though no weaker in faith, was yet less logical in feeling. He was displeased at Moritz's unfortunate indiscretion; the tears often came into his eyes when he looked at Agatha's pale cheeks, and his daily life, which *she* alone had brightened for the old man, weighed upon him in gloomy heaviness.

The letter had an excellent effect on him. It reconciled him completely to Moritz's flight. He would sit

for hours turning over the leaves of the Bible, to find examples by which to prove to his wife that the Lord would always take the part of the righteous, which she by no means denied, only that she understood it differently. He observed, not without concern, that the good lady, now that she knew the fugitive to be once more on the road to fortune, was inclined to judge his offence more harshly. She referred repeatedly to such passages in Proverbs as condemn anger, and still more distinctly to the Epistle to the Ephesians, the fourth chapter of which she knew by rote. But she could not have had the heart of a mother, if she had not rejoiced in the hopeful smiles of her divinely-favored daughter, whose lovely eyes she had not for weeks seen otherwise than swollen with weeping.

Ay, wholly unselfish as she was, she even was the first to give room to the idea that man and wife should live apart only so long as it could not possibly be avoided. She, therefore, proposed that, as soon as Agatha should have been safely delivered, with the aid of the gentle Saviour; and the Swedish war, with the Lord's help, was victoriously ended, the count, in case his somewhat impaired health admitted of it, should take his daughter to St. Petersburg to rejoin her husband. Agatha's heart beat higher, and her eyes sparkled, when her good mother communicated to her plans like this.

But, alas! this hopeful dream was not to last long; they were soon to be awakened from it in a terrible manner.

The courier who brought Moritz's letter to Agatha had travelled quickly. The progress of the com-

mon mail at that time, as I have already remarked, was much slower, particularly to places which were not situated on the great postal route. More than a fortnight passed, therefore, before the intelligence of the new revolution in Russia penetrated to Silesia.

The blow was fearful. When it first fell, it was accompanied by thunder and lightning, that is, with fabulous rumors of murder and carnage. Soon, however, the intelligence that the new empress had sworn a solemn oath to shed no human blood by executions during her reign, spread a soothing balm on the wounds inflicted. Elizabeth used the traditional mildness of her sex as a means of ingratiating herself with the people. There is a touch of voluptuousness in a transient sensual feeling of pity. She sent word to the imprisoned empress-regent "that she might console herself; she should have every comfort—to the throne alone she had no claim." At first, too, she suffered the grand-ducal family to entertain the hope of a mere exile in Germany. Ere long, however, in vacillating fear and fickle despotism, she deemed it safer to cause her prisoners, who had already started on their journey, to be arrested in Riga, and assign them a residence in the citadel of that city.

But the history of this empress offers a warning example of the fearful morally-corrupting influence exercised by the consciousness of arbitrary power. Although in her youth, while entirely dependent on others, she had committed no glaring offence; though she had even manifested a certain tearful susceptibility, and a nervous dread of *putting to death*, as the last, irrevocable step, yet the first opportunity of practising

the evil with *impunity* awakened in her an irresistible desire to do so; the power of exercising cruelties without the fear of seeing them avenged aroused the inclination for them, just as, in young beasts of prey, the unconquerable appetite for blood is only called forth by seeing it flow. True, she mitigated the barbarous death-sentences, which the court of the triumphant old-Russian party passed on the detested foreign intruders, to a banishment for life "into misery;" but so hardened was her heart by her two months' enjoyment of an unlimited power, that she had caused all those who had been so ignominiously pardoned to be led to the place of execution. Even the aged, suffering Ostermann, who had served the empire for thirty years, was forced to mount the scaffold, and lay his trembling head upon the block, before the officer of justice was allowed to inform him that "God and the empress granted him his life."

When the intelligence spread over Europe that Münnich, Ostermann, and Löwenwolde, were henceforth to pine away their lives in the wilderness, the reign of this empress was condemned by the *bon mot*: "that she had at one stroke banished, with Ostermann, wisdom; with Münnich, bravery; and with Löwenwolde, refinement of manners from her empire."

Toward her unfortunate relatives, too, she showed herself more irritated and cruel, the more she realized that it only depended upon her to crush them entirely, and the more certain she became that the heartless selfishness of her princely cousins in Germany had caused them to give up all thought of interfering in favor of the unhappy family. She had them dragged

from prison to prison, each of which degraded them a step further, until at length she deemed a half-desert island in the Dwina, surrounded for nine months of the year by batteries of blocks of ice, sufficiently joyless and isolated. Here Luna, of Mecklenburg, died five years later, in gloomy resignation to her fate. The degenerate scion of the race of Guelphs, Anton Ulrich, lived on for thirty years more, to perish at last in almost brute stupidity. The unfortunate imperial prince, over whom she at first shed a few sentimental tears, and whom, during the first years of her reign, she had not the heart to deprive of parental care, she subsequently caused systematically to grow up, in darkness and prison-atmosphere, to complete idiocy. Of the diabolical cruelty with which she revenged herself for every act or word which envy, jealousy, and injured vanity, led her to construe into personal insult, history gives testimony of the most horrible kind.

It was only in single, indistinct features ; only in scattered, timid newspaper items ; in rare, uncertain reports of returning travellers, whose echo often arrived in the provinces from the capital in an incoherent and hardly comprehensible form, that the news of these terrible events finally reached Silesia. Only the principal names were mentioned, and even they with countless contradictions ; if any of the less important were named, it was merely to connect them with the most fearful, or at any rate the most incredible rumors. What had become of Moritz ? Would he not have written if he had been so fortunate as to escape ? Had he, like the others, transferred his services to the new

empress? And, if so, might he not later, when, in the absence of Elizabeth, the rage of the Russian party against the Germans came to such a fearful outbreak, have fallen a prey to the wild fury of the prætorian guards? Month after month passed away, without bringing any intelligence of him. In what prison might he be languishing? Was he still among the living?

In this emergency it became quite evident that the worthy Countess Promnitz could do something besides praying. She was indefatigable in writing letters herself, and inducing her husband to do the same, as far as his increasing infirmities would permit. All the influence of their respective families, the Reuss and the Promnitz, was brought into play for making inquiries at St. Petersburg, while, at their instigation, similar steps would have been taken from Brunswick, through Moritz's uncle, if the death of the latter had not interfered. The Prussian, the Austrian, and the Polish-Saxon ambassadors, were appealed to. But with regard to Prussia the matter was difficult. Winterfeld had been recalled. The new minister was not personally acquainted with Moritz, and declined having any thing to do with the fugitive cashiered officer. The Austrian and Saxon ministers promised to do their best, and did make some inquiries, but no one could be found who had known the newly-arrived stranger. No one could tell any thing about Moritz; nothing was to be learned of him.

The chief reason was, that the inquiries were made too cautiously, too timidly. It was known that Elizabeth was much incensed against Marquis Botta and

Count Lynar, both of whom had sided with Anna. Both, indeed, had long since been recalled, and other ministers filled their posts, but the empress was still inwardly convinced that the former had acted in the name of their governments, and therefore entertained the same mistrust against the new representatives of Austria and Saxony. Under this empress the intrusive, arrogant influence of Russia on German affairs almost reached its height, and unfortunately the base cringing of the German governments to Russia was also already beginning to show itself. The barbarity of the Russian government was only timidly touched upon by the German papers, and the crimes of its despotism were carefully veiled. The ambassadors had to act in the most cautious manner, in order, as their masters did not venture to manifest any sympathy for the dethroned family, not to give any offence by showing any interest in its adherents.

The only hope, therefore, of learning any thing of Moritz, rested with Prince Ludwig of Brunswick, the brother of the regent, of whom it was known that he would leave Russia as soon as he could disentangle himself, without irritating the empress, from the snares laid for him. As soon as his arrival in Berlin could be ascertained, the matter was laid before him with the greatest urgency. Oh! it was a sad day at Castle Wildeneck, when the letter from his secretary arrived, in which the prince expressed his most fervent regret at not being able to give the young widow any consoling intelligence with regard to her missing husband, whose name he had not heard mentioned since that unfortunate night in December. After this the



days of the Promnitz family were darker than ever. Only that the light of their faith in the wise providence of God shone brighter and brighter, as the small, dim flames of their hopes in man's help died away one by one.

More than seven months of heavy conflict had crept along in melancholy uniformity since Moritz's flight, when in the spring Agatha gave birth to a healthy girl. The grandparents had hoped that the child would be a comfort to the young mother. But it seemed as if her dejection increased from day to day. She saw only the fatherless orphan in her little daughter, even though she loved her just on that account with double tenderness. She had insisted on nursing the child herself, a practice unheard of at that time among the high nobility. But she heard Moritz say that it was the first duty of a mother, and that a hired wet-nurse was a thing contrary to Nature. For the period had commenced when Nature, which had been banished from the family-life of the higher circles, was to be reinstated in her rights. Every reminiscence of Moritz was sacred to the young wife; each word that he had spoken, a law for her.

At the suggestion of the countess, the child received in baptism the beautiful names of Fides Caritas Speranza. The grandmother called her Fides, her mother and grandfather Speranza, which in French, and adopted from it in German, sounded very well as *Espérance*. But the countess, in course of time, became somewhat concerned lest the child was getting to be too much the object of their *worldly* hopes. It was therefore agreed to call her Caritas, and as Cari-

tas she will henceforth be presented to the indulgent reader.

The war, which, during the winter, had been conducted rather indolently, had meanwhile been carried more toward Bohemia and Moravia, and, on breaking out again more vigorously in the spring, was soon after decided in favor of Frederick by the victory of Czaslau. In June peace was concluded, and Silesia, with the exception of a small portion, became a Prussian province.

Agatha heard this intelligence, so welcome to all those who shared her religious belief, with perfect indifference. The Prussian army was of importance to her only as long as Moritz belonged to it; the king, who had been so harsh toward him, had become to her the object of a quiet inward hatred, which the mother observed, in her pious, gentle child, with some uneasiness. Altogether she could perceive how happiness and sorrow had, as it were, *educated* her daughter, and developed her character to a degree of self-dependence unusual in so young a person. She remained the same affectionate, dutiful daughter that she had been since her childhood. But her views took a different individual direction. The seed which her brief, intimate companionship with Moritz had sown within her, grew up independently to a peculiar plant, which already in its first germs was forced to draw from its own natural sap the strength to resist the storms of life, and was to develop still more fully in the heavy trials of Agatha's riper years.

The autumn had come, and Caritas, a healthy, blooming, sunny-tempered child, was just six months

old, when Agatha surprised her mother one day by the question whether she thought that a healthy child might, at the age of half a year, be without injury transferred to another nurse, or safely weaned entirely.

The countess wished to know what had given rise to this question, upon which her daughter confided to her that she had long been revolving in her mind the plan of going to Russia herself in search of her husband, and had now fully determined to do so. She would leave no means untried of hearing about Moritz, whether he were still alive, or had preceded her to heaven. She was resolved to throw herself at the feet of the empress, and to wring from her some certainty as to her husband's fate, and, if that were still in mortal hands, clemency for him. She had wished to do this immediately after her confinement, but the memory of Moritz had pointed to the duty she owed her child as the chief of all her earthly duties. But now winter was at hand, and she must not let it pass by without acting. From inquiries which she had made, she had learned that the roads in the interior of Russia were so bad that they could be travelled over only very slowly and with great difficulty in summer; while in winter they were covered with deep snow, over which light sleighs could glide along swiftly. Who could tell but what she might be forced to seek for her beloved husband in the wilds of Siberia? The forests of Poland, too, were difficult to traverse in summer on account of the boggy roads; it was, therefore, absolutely necessary that she should go soon, should go *now*. The question now was whether it would be safer to give Caritas a wet-nurse—she had carefully kept her

eye on the young peasant-woman whom her mother had formerly intended for the same office, and whose child was of the same age as Caritas—or whether the child, healthy as she was, was not ripe for other food, and whether she might venture to lay so great a care upon her dear, venerated mother.

The countess was in the highest degree astonished when her daughter, with quiet composure, laid before her this bold plan, perfectly matured. She had been too long accustomed to think and act for the whole household, not to feel a little hurt at first at seeing her daughter, whom, but a year ago, she had looked upon as a mere child, so suddenly mentally emancipated. This was, indeed, but human; but the countess had too noble a nature to give way to this feeling for more than a moment. After a few minutes of quiet thought, she approved of Agatha's plan, and sought, by means of her favorite "thumbing," to find an authorization thereof in the Word of God, in which, as can well be imagined, she met with complete success.

It was more difficult to obtain the consent of the count; it was only through the shrewdness of his wife, who knew exactly how to manage him, that he was at last induced to sanction the plan. Agatha avoided speaking of it to her father, for he was more tender-hearted than her mother, and the mere thought of his daughter's exposing herself to the dangers of such a journey, and of his not being able to see her besides for more than a year, excited him. Unfortunately, the state of his health made it impossible for him to accompany her. The gout, to which he had been subject for a season already in his youth, had reappeared with

redoubled violence in his old age, and had settled in his feet. He suffered severe pain, and could only walk with the aid of a cane. A winter's journey was therefore out of the question for him.

The countess, ever kind and self-sacrificing, undertook, in addition to the care of her husband, that of little Caritas, whom, as she said, she hoped to bring up with the Saviour's help, i. e., with the help of an efficient nurse-maid hired in the name of Christ, without needing the services of a wet-nurse. She saw plainly how anxious the poor young wife felt with regard to her child and her infirm father, and in this case, too, it was her cheerful trust in God which sustained all around her.

A journey, indeed, was quite a different undertaking a hundred and twenty years ago from what it is in our day, particularly on the part of a lady hardly nineteen, who had never yet spent a night under a roof which did not also shelter her mother; and a journey to Russia above all! Even far into our present century the name of Russia was associated with the idea of something monstrous, outlandish, barbaric. In the time of the daughter of Peter the Great it was still wrapped for Germany in a dense obscurity, through which there only resounded distinctly the fearful echo of the acts of beastly grossness and brutality which the great czar, her father, had perpetrated while travelling in the country about twenty years before. The latest events, of which, as we know, only a few isolated features penetrated to the neighboring countries, had stained with fresh blood-spots the dark veil which concealed the Russian colossus. Unknown Russia, as it

lay spread out upon the map in such enormous extent, and so void and desolatè, seemed more awful even than Turkey, just because so much less was known of it than of the latter. About Turkey, people might talk and the papers might print whatever they pleased; while, of Russia, nothing could be reported in the latter but what the cowardly caution of the better-informed cabinets permitted.

Agatha shared all the ignorance and all the exaggerated ideas of her time on this subject; but the dread which she felt did not shake her resolution for one moment; nor did she journey like Madame Cottin's famous heroine, Elizabeth, on foot and supported only by her touching beauty. She travelled as became her station, with maid and valet, and in her own carriage, which was supplied with post-horses wherever there were post-routes, and with horses hired from Jewish wagoners where there were none. Kerkow, the faithful old servant, who had repeatedly visited the neighboring kingdom of Poland, and was familiar with its language, and knew just enough Russian to make his way in Russia, took care of every thing. Agatha was supplied with a huge pocket-book full of letters of introduction to countless ambassadors and magnates of the empire, and, what was still more important, with a large purse full of bright gold-pieces, and an unlimited letter of credit for drawing as much money as she would need for the accomplishment of her purpose; for the piety of her parents by no means excluded a shrewd knowledge of the world, and their generosity made them ready for any sacrifice for their child's happiness. Agatha, therefore, reached St.

Petersburg without any important difficulties, entitled, according to human conclusions, to every hope of success, and her young heart filled with the fairest.

It was only after she had reached her destination, the Russian imperial-city, that her hardest trials began. Like a wanderer, who with patient courage has ascended a long, rough mountain-path, in the certain hope of finding at the top the right road which will lead him on, the spot from which he can overlook the heights and depressions which he has still to pass before reaching his destination, and who, the day having passed with his arduous climbing, is suddenly surprised by the gray evening, so that on reaching the height he can only see that an abyss lies before him, and below him a trackless morass, while all around him is the impenetrable forest, and who all at once is seized with the horrible fear awakened by nocturnal solitude, and with the confusing influence of darkness, and knows no longer from which direction he has come, and which he must take to find the right way—so poor Agatha felt, when suddenly the abyss of the great new world yawned before her, and she was confused by the barbaric darkness of coarse passions and brutal desires, the expression of which she hardly understood; and the slough of moral corruption which surrounded her filled her pure spirit with disgust.

In St. Petersburg, as in Germany, Moritz's existence was shrouded in impenetrable darkness. No one knew any thing about him, no one had ever heard his name. He had been in the country only a few weeks; without acquaintances, without connections; hardly one of the diplomatic employés had known his name.

The most natural inference was, that he was to be sought for in the suite of Duke Anton Ulrich. But just this fact made the matter more difficult. A thick veil was cast over the residence of the unfortunate regents; the plans for their fate were evidently not ripe in the heads of the czarina and her ministers. An attempt to lift the veil seemed hazardous; any act of interference might check the possible emotions of pity of the offended autocrat. Agatha had but one fervent wish, to obtain an audience of Elizabeth herself. "She is a woman," she thought. "She must have a heart. I will prostrate myself in the dust before her, I will embrace her knees, I will cling to her until she restores my husband to me!"

But none of her letters to ambassadors and ministers brought the poor young petitioner a step nearer to her end, and, as far as the former were concerned, for the same reasons which had made all written inquiries of no avail. To the Prussian ambassador she could not venture to apply. The rest put her off with promises; she was turned away with polite excuses, with shallow evasions, and finally not admitted any more.

Painfully though she felt such treatment, what was it to that which our poor young heroine experienced among the high officials attached to the court? Elizabeth had been raised to the throne by a few rude men, from the dregs of the people, and had rewarded them for it by several of the highest dignities of the empire. But, even aside from this, the barbaric crudeness of the Russian nobility, to which some others among Elizabeth's ministers belonged, had not yet been var-



nished over with that superficial French culture which at a later period gave rise to the cruel witticism that designated the magnates of this still half-Asiatic country as "monkeys grafted on tigers." All her gold did not suffice to satisfy the wild desires of the monsters with whom her object brought her in contact; shuddering, full of abhorrence, the deeply-insulted woman at length retired into profound obscurity, which Kerkow had procured for her in the family of a worthy German tradesman, who had come to the country under the Empress Anna, and had been known to him in former years.

To Kerkow, too, the good, trusty servant, she owed it that at last, after more than two months of vain waiting and struggling, a small back-door, as it were, was opened to her, by which to gain admittance to the empress. With the gold of which his young mistress gave him full control, he had found means of winning over a waiting-woman in the service of the empress, and consequently Agatha found herself, one morning, full of hope, however anxious and trembling, posted in a dressing-room of the czarina just as the latter issued from her bedchamber, in the happiest mood, still all aglow with the after-feeling of a night of pleasure, a rich mantle of satin, lined with fur, thrown over her thin night-dress.

Agatha's tall, slender figure, clad in sable mourning garments, stood close by the door, her cheeks deathly pale, her eyes swollen with weeping. She sunk upon her knees and seized the dress of the czarina with trembling hand. Her voice failed her.

"Who is this?" asked the empress, somewhat

startled, and the waiting-woman uttered a few hurried words in Russian, of which Agatha comprehended only the pleading tone.

But it needed only a moment to restore the courage of the latter. The expression of Elizabeth's face was a kind one. Had Agatha been blooming, like her, radiant with beauty and health, her envy might have been roused, for she hated all who outshone her, and history has recorded with what fearful cruelty she was wont to avenge her offended charms; but the very fact that the beauty of the poor young creature prostrate before her was *so entirely different* from her own, touched her heart and called forth her sympathy for her misfortune.

"What ails thee, my poor child?" she asked, kindly; "what can I do for thee? Let me see!"

She spoke German, with which she was perfectly familiar. She took the petition from Agatha's hand, but the latter instinctively recognized her momentary advantage too well to intrust her cause to written words. She had, indeed, drawn up her petition as concisely as possible, and had very wisely, without infringing on the truth, mentioned only such points as could in no way give offence; that Moritz had come to Russia to take part in the war against Sweden; that the circumstance of his being a native of Brunswick had brought him into the personal service of Duke Anton; that a mere accident had caused his being on guard in the antechamber of the latter, and his being arrested on the night of the revolution; but that, since that occasion, he had disappeared entirely. She was conscious, however, as the czarina looked at her compas-

sionately, of being able to plead her cause far more eloquently in person. She mentioned, in addition to the above, that she had only been married two months; that an innocent, fatherless child joined in her petition, and the tears which she could hardly restrain gave an irresistible eloquence to her words.

"Thou shalt have him back again, poor child," said the empress, full of pity. "Only two months? Thou shalt have him back again, even if he should be more guilty than thou thinkest. I will speak to Tsher-kaskoi. Thou mayst go home with a quiet mind."

But a terrible fear came over Agatha, when she heard the chancellor's name. She clung firmly to the knees of the empress with such urgent entreaties, that the latter finally, half-laughing, half-impatient, gave orders to send for the chancellor on the spot, and directed the waiting-woman to take "the poor young thing" to her room, and there let her await the result.

We will not weary our readers with a description of Agatha's state of mind. The evening had already closed in, when the kind-hearted waiting-woman, who overwhelmed her with praises and congratulations, the import of which Agatha could guess but partially, conducted her once more to the empress.

The latter called out to her in a kind voice, as she entered the room: "Thy husband is in Berezov, in the government of Tobolsk, in Siberia. He is well. God knows I am sorry enough that so many innocent persons must suffer when the guilty are punished. Here," she continued, showing her a paper, "here is his pardon, and to-morrow it shall be sent by a *chasseur* to the governor of Tobolsk."

But Agatha's fervent entreaties were once more victorious. "Let me, let me, most gracious majesty, be the bearer of your clemency," she cried, covering the hand of the empress with kisses. "Oh grant me still this one favor! Oh, suffer me to thank your majesty for this also! Let me call down the blessings of Heaven upon your head for this grace too!"

"What!" cried the empress; "thou knowest not what thou askest. Russia is not Italy. Thy delicate body is not fit to bear our climate. Do thou quietly await his arrival here. Thou mayst be sure of it. He can be here in four weeks."

Nevertheless, she was pleased with Agatha's perseverance, and struck by the romance of her plan. She at length delivered the document into her hands. "May God give His blessing on thy journey, then!" she said, not without emotion. "The *chasseur* shall go as thy escort. Every thing shall be done to facilitate thy foolish undertaking. I will give strict orders to that effect."

And Elizabeth kept her word. On the following evening, Agatha, wrapped in furs and feather beds, was seated in a closely-covered sleigh; old Kerkow, equally well protected, beside her, only because his mistress insisted on his taking this place; the *chasseur*, who was to see that all was done on the way to facilitate her journey through a desolate, snow-covered land, in the uncovered forward part of the *kibitka*; her maid Agatha prudently left behind, supplied with every means of returning to Germany, or, if she preferred it, seeking a new situation in St. Petersburg.

On the morning before Agatha's departure, the chan-

cellor had sent one of his secretaries to her, for the favor of the empress had suddenly changed the whole coloring of his relation to the beautiful petitioner, who was commissioned to make all necessary arrangements for her. Among other things, he had given her a paper which, with her ignorance of the Russian language, would be of great use to her. It was a command, in the name of the empress, to a German who had for many years been living in Berezov, to give his services to the lady who brought it, in every way in which she needed them.

This countryman of Agatha's had come to Russia more than thirty years ago, under the great Peter's terrible rule, to try his fortune there as a physician. Skilful and active as he was, he was doing very well in his business, when, one day at a drinking-bout, having imbibed too freely, he fell into a quarrel with some Russians, and had the misfortune to kill the son of a *boyar* with an empty bottle which struck his temple. The exasperated father easily found means to have the case treated as one of *murder*, instead of *manslaughter*, and the stranger was sentenced to death. But his title of doctor saved his life. The intelligence had just reached Moscow that a malignant epidemic had penetrated into Siberia from China, which swept away the scanty population beyond all power of resistance, and made the desolate land still more desolate. The czar therefore gave orders to send thither all the German doctors who could be found, and, in consequence of this, young Dr. Brenner was pardoned, and let off with a few blows of the knout graciously bestowed upon him, and a life-long banishment to Siberia. He soon gained without trouble so decided a su-

periority over his colleagues—a few journeyman barbers and a runaway druggist's assistant, who had settled in Russia as practising physicians—that his merits were acknowledged also by the government, and he was made physician-in-chief for half of Siberia, through which he was obliged to make an annual journey of inspection, while Berezov was appointed as his place of residence. It was this man, who was familiar with both languages, and thoroughly at home in every thing which concerned the place of her destination, who was to be Agatha's support and helper in the new world toward which love was leading her. Thus it had been ordained by the favor of the czarina herself, who had heard about Dr. Brenner through her private physician L'Estocq.

Agatha, however, attached but little value to this circumstance. All difficulties still before her had vanished from her joy-beaming eyes. Through all the weeks of her winter's journey, which led her deep, deep into the European desert, into the Asiatic wilderness, which was only known to her through its association with banishment, knout, barbarity, and crime, she experienced no trace of fear and discouragement. Her young heart could harbor only joy and gratitude to God the deliverer, the merciful, as the sleigh flew restlessly on over the deep snow, day and night, ever onward and onward—all around, as far as the eye could reach, nothing but loneliness and desolation, more and more a dreary waste the nearer she approached to her journey's end. Whenever, while changing horses, or as she received the nourishment which Kerkow would bring to her under the direction

of the *chasseur*, a human eye met her own, it rested upon her kindly, full of pity and respect, which latter feeling was called forth by the imperial protection under which she travelled. Had she been an exile, the pity of the kind-hearted Russian peasants, which accompanies all those sent "into misery," would have met her still more warmly. As it was, her youth, her beauty, and the pallor of her cheeks, which alternated with a feverish color, secured to her the sympathy of all who saw her. Besides gratitude to God, her heart had room but for one feeling: "I shall have him back again! He is saved!"

Happy youth, which sees a star of hope shining even through the darkest clouds that threateningly cover the horizon; while age, and even the mature intellect, are forced to plod onward along an unilluminated path!

Berezov was, in the middle of the last century, one of the best towns of Siberia, but still a dreary, comfortless place, such as Agatha had never seen. In summer it was somewhat enlivened by a river, on which fishing-boats passed to and fro; now the town, the river, and the whole country around, were all covered with one boundless sheet of snow. The nearer she drew to her destination, the higher did Agatha's heart beat; and now only a feeling of oppression came over her, which increased to a kind of stupor. She had, as has been observed before, attached but little importance to the letter to Dr. Brenner. At least she had given orders, so as not to lose a moment, to have the sleigh stop at the house of the governor, to whom, as she thought, she only needed to show the empress's

order to liberate Moritz. But now it suddenly struck her as possible that the governor, whose authority here was quite an arbitrary one, might have sent Moritz to another place, in which case an explanation would be very difficult. She therefore concluded to go first to the doctor, and altered her commands to that effect.

After a night rendered sleepless and long by impatience, the travellers at length arrived in Berezov. Fourteen days and nights had passed since they had left St. Petersburg. They drove through long, wide streets formed by one-storied wooden houses, surrounded by smaller out-houses. The sleigh finally stopped before one of the best of the former, the house of the physician.

By a fortunate accident, Dr. Brenner had just returned from his tour of inspection; his horse and sleigh were still standing unharnessed in the courtyard; and the doctor, wrapped in a thick fur coat, had entered the house at the very moment when Agatha's sleigh stopped before it. He stepped outside of the door again while she alighted.

A short, thick-set man stood before her and looked at her searchingly with a pair of sparkling eyes, which shone out from between black, bushy eyebrows and copper-colored cheeks. A thick black beard, streaked with gray, almost concealed the lower part of his face. He cast his eye over the imperial letter, which Agatha gave him with trembling hand, and the expression of his face grew still darker. Once more he looked at her sharply, as he raised his fur cap and said, in a gruff voice, "Walk in, madame."



Agatha entered the bare, inhospitable room of her countryman. She sunk upon the wooden chair which he offered to her, and asked, in a low voice: "Do you know Baron Hohenhorst? Do you know my husband? And is he here?"

"I know your husband," he answered, curtly. "And why should he not be here? He was here four weeks ago, when I started on my journey."

"Oh, my dear sir," said Agatha, as she rose and sunk back trembling on her chair, "let us not lose a moment, let us go to the governor!"

"One moment's patience," replied the doctor, taking a bottle from a cupboard in the corner, and pouring out a glass of brandy, which he offered her. "You need strengthening."

Agatha drew back with a shudder. "Oho!" said the doctor, with a coarse laugh, "I see your ladyship is a stranger in this country. No living in Russia without brandy." He forced her to take at least a few drops. Then he went on:

"Your ladyship may make yourself easy. Your husband has been better off here than ever any one else sent into misery. The governor is an idiot, but he is not a bad man, and, stupid though he is, he knew well enough what there was of Baron Hohenhorst, and how to turn it to the best advantage. You see he had a son whom he idolized, the only one left to him of ten children. The boy was growing up here without instruction, like a calf. When the German baron came, the old man soon found out that he was a scholar, and made him the teacher and guide of his son, and so he had a good time, got the best of such

food as we can get in this God-forsaken land, and your husband was wise, and kept himself and the boy out of the governor's way whenever he was drunk. But the boy had a good heart; he wouldn't look at any one but Hohenhorst, or Gongorst, as the barbarians here call him, and perfectly idolized him. Now you see, madame," continued the doctor, beginning to grow excited, "you see the boy fell sick, and finally went into a quick consumption. No medical skill in the world can cure that in a day. The father began to whine and to blubber like an old woman, and thought he knew better, and asked the advice of an old witch, and secretly doctored the boy with quack medicines, and had charms spoken, and the sign of the cross made over him, till he succeeded in getting him into his grave. And on that, madame," he cried, with an oath, and almost in a rage, "on that I made a solemn vow that I would not enter his house again. He is the governor, to be sure. But what do I care for that? He needs me more than I him. They can't do without me here. I am determined to have my rights, and I'm sorry about the boy."

Agatha had listened to him as if stunned. "Good God!" she cried, starting up in dismay, "a vow! Then I must go alone to the governor, to my husband. The heavenly Father will assist me!"

"Patience—patience, madame!" he cried, still in a tone of annoyance, though somewhat pacified. "The empress commands. What can I do? In this accursed land we can only obey. And I'm sorry for you, and you can't get along without me."

Agatha gladly let him have the satisfaction of

thinking so. A short ride brought them to the house of the governor, a miserable edifice, which was hardly superior to that of the doctor, except that it covered more ground, and was made still more repulsive by the filth accumulated about its entrance.

The day had progressed meanwhile, and the governor was already in his office—a long, dreary apartment, with coarse benches ranged along the walls, on which were seated several waiting clients, and a table in the middle, at which sat a couple of secretaries. The governor, a large, coarse-looking man, with a broad, dark-red face, and small gray eyes, from which shone an expression of unmistakable good-nature, was walking to and fro while giving his orders. He wore an old sheepskin, thrown over a shabby uniform, and from his whole appearance he would have been taken in Germany rather for a coachman or hostler than for a high official.

When Dr. Brenner entered the room, he cast upon him a look of welcome, evidently rejoiced at seeing him reconciled. But his eyes turned in some dismay to the lady who accompanied the doctor, whose refined appearance quite confused him.

Agatha's mind had reached the highest pitch of excitement. With convulsive haste she approached the stranger, on whose answer her life's happiness depended, and held toward him, without uttering a word, the order of the empress.

Her eyes were fastened upon the features of the bewildered governor. He read. But what words could express what she felt when she saw him turn pale—when she saw him tremble convulsively, and

the hand which held the paper drop to his side, while he muttered a few words which were incomprehensible to her !

She stared at him, speechless, confounded.

He repeated the words, turning to the doctor.

Bewildered, beseechingly her eyes followed his movement. The doctor summoned courage to speak.

At length he said, in a low voice, "*He is dead ; has been dead three weeks !*"

## CHAPTER IX.

### NEW TRIALS.

Who could depict Agatha's state when those terrible words suddenly snapped the overstrained chords of her inward being? Her body, as well as her soul, was totally exhausted. She fainted. When she came to herself, and had with difficulty learned to comprehend her situation, she wished to see her husband's grave. The doctor tried to dissuade her, but in vain. The governor, who did not cease to overwhelm the unhappy woman with long speeches, which, from his tone, and from the tears which ran over his coarse face, she could understand to be expressions of sympathy, finally opened a large book, and showed the doctor a number. She was taken to an immense field, thickly covered with snow, from which, here and there, a cross, coarsely fashioned of common wood, protruded. But few among the long ranks of these rough monuments had resisted the effects of storm and wintry weather. Moritz's cross was comparatively fresh, and bore the number 78. For numbers only, not names, were granted the unfortunate exiles, who, with their social position, lost also their identity. If an aggrava-

tion of Agatha's anguish was possible, it was caused by this sight.

Providence took means to prevent the poor young heart from bleeding to death from the fearful wound which it had received, by inflicting another, comparatively slight one, the dressing of which laid claim to Agatha's moral force.

Kerkow, whose advanced age had only artificially defied the manifold hardships of the journey, could resist no longer. He became seriously ill. Agatha awakened to the consciousness that a duty still remained to her which bound her to life. In the house of the doctor, where she was supplied with every thing needful—most imperfectly, indeed, but still better than elsewhere in the place—she sat night and day, by the bedside of the good old man, and nursed him with filial care and affection. The doctor, whose clumsy roughness was melted by his admiration for the young, beautiful, noble lady, almost into a tender-hearted paternal familiarity, pronounced Kerkow's illness more likely to be protracted than dangerous. A truly humane sympathy was united in him to the prospect of an ample remuneration. In the twilight of the sick-room, during the long evenings, he would tell Agatha about Moritz, whom he had seen a great deal of, and in the intercourse with whom, as he said, he had once more refreshed himself after many dreary years. Moritz's pupil, he repeated, was a bright, affectionate boy, was fond of learning, had spoken German and French, and studied various other things, and had clung to his tutor with all the love of his childish heart. And Moritz had nursed him faithfully

during his illness, and watched by him every night, for which the father had always been full of his praises, so that madame might depend upon it that her husband had been well treated. The governor had told him that Moritz had probably caught the fever from the boy. He had died, after a short illness, during the absence of the doctor.

Here the latter, ever mistrustful, added, somewhat dubiously: "Whether the old fool did not, on some occasion when he was trying to drink down his grief for his Sasha,\* and had drained his bottle rather too deeply, lay hands on your husband, that I will not answer for. A man in liquor is but half a man!" (A sad truth drawn from his own experience.) "It seems to me sometimes as if he had something on his conscience. The old fellow often stops here to inquire about Kerkow. But your ladyship he is afraid to see. He says your grief makes him too soft-hearted. And he sheds tears enough whenever he speaks of you, for tears flow very easily with the Russians."

Spring had for some time been smiling on German lands, but an impenetrable crust of snow fortunately still covered the Siberian steppes, when Kerkow's restored health at length admitted of the travellers' leaving Berezov. Sometimes, when sitting, lost in mournful meditation, by the old man's bedside, Agatha, as she thought of the possibility that he too might be called home by God, and she obliged to return alone, had been seized with a morbid longing to end her life here, in the vicinity of Moritz's grave; but then would come the thought of her aged parents, and

\* Abbreviation of Alexander.

oh! of her deserted child—Moritz's child! She was terrified at herself! "Forgive me, dearest," she would then say inwardly, "forgive my unmotherly cowardice! I will love our child tenfold, a thousand-fold, for thy sake!"

More than two years had slowly crept away. Agatha was once more living in the house of her parents, just as before her marriage, only that the misty twilight shed by the never-ending sameness of the family devotions, was lit up for the loving mother by the sunbeams which shone from her little daughter's eyes. Nevertheless, life weighed very oppressively upon the young widow. She felt that she had changed. While she was conscious of having, under Moritz's brief guidance, and subsequently through the sore afflictions of an enforced self-dependence, drawn nearer to God, she felt at the same time that she had become estranged from the expression of piety which her venerated parents gave to theirs. Thus a sort of inner unrest came over her, which she strove alternately to conquer and to forget in the loving companionship of her child. But in vain.

There was, however, a heavier trial in store for her. The countess, quite advanced in age, for Agatha was the youngest of her children, had been enabled, by a strong, robust constitution, and an exceedingly temperate mode of life, to retain her vigor in a surprising degree. But now she was seized by an inward trouble, which confined her to her bed for some time. The disease was painful. The excellent woman's true piety showed itself in the inexhaustible pa-



tience with which she bore, first, the inactivity forced upon her, and ere long the not inconsiderable suffering which her illness occasioned. The pain, indeed, grew more and more violent, and the physicians at length, after the patient had been under their treatment for full six months, pronounced the disease incurable.

No human being was ever better prepared for death than Countess Benigna. But, although edifying, it yet made an awful impression on the husband and daughter, when the sick woman, instead of bearing the sufferings which God sent her in quiet resignation, broke into a loud burst of triumph with every new attack of bodily pain, praising the Lord for letting her endure, while still in this world, the punishment which, as one of the sinful race of man, she had richly merited, even though the Saviour had washed her clean with His blood, and thus preparing unalloyed happiness for her in the life beyond. It was only when, a few days before her death, her bodily sufferings ceased, that she grew quiet in the feeling that her God was reconciled, and she looked like a saint, as, filled with rapture, she seemed to see heaven opening before her, and, with a transfigured smile, bestowed a blessing on the loved ones whom she left behind.

Agatha shed many burning tears for the precious departed one. She had now a heavy task to perform, in endeavoring to do all in her power to replace to her poor desolate father the loving wife who had been in all things his faithful helpmeet. She relieved the old gentleman, as much as possible, from all business cares; but it was not in her quiet, introspective nature to serve him, instead of Countess Benigna, as a

spiritual support, nor enliven him by her companionship in the diffuse, talkative manner which had afforded him constant entertainment. She would bring him the child, which he loved with all a grandfather's affection; but that would fill up only a small part of the day. She searched among the old books, handed down from his grandfather, for one which would interest him; but, whatever she might select, hardly fifteen minutes would pass before he was fast asleep. An innocent little game of cards, such as *tric-trac* or *grabuge*, she did not venture to propose, for fear of insulting the memory of her venerated mother.

It was therefore hardly to be wondered at that the poor count at length sought entertainment outside, and, after the first half of the mourning year was over, used the visits of condolence which he had received from the whole neighborhood, as a means of renewing a social intercourse which had been completely discontinued. As his health had improved perceptibly, he began once more to make calls, mostly on the pious families of the neighboring estates, in some cases also on others, with whom the countess had kept up an acquaintance in Agatha's early youth. He was everywhere received with great politeness, and by degrees time began to weigh less heavily upon him.

For Agatha this turn of events was a great relief; she was, however, firm in her respectful refusal to accompany her father on his visits. She occupied herself more and more with her child, and cherished in her heart a plan by the execution of which she desired to honor the memory of her beloved dead. Living simply, and entirely secluded from society as she did,

she used only a small portion of the money settled upon her at her marriage. Thus her income had increased to a small capital. With this money it was her wish to found an orphan asylum—the new government left her free to do so—and she could sit for hours, occupied with her needlework, and think how she could best unite, as the principle on which to base the education of her little orphan charges, the religion of her beloved mother with Moritz's more enlightened piety. Thus Agatha's memories of her departed ones were ever connected with the thought of God; she was calm and resigned, and always cheerful with her child. But her beauty, which was developing more and more, bloomed in total darkness, and was seen and admired by no one but the humble inmates of her household.

At supper, after his return from his afternoon coffee-visits, her father would tell her of one thing and another which he had heard discussed, after she had given him a detailed report of all little Caritas's sayings and doings during his absence; how she had learned one new word, or comically distorted another, etc.; and the delight and laughter of the fond grandfather formed one of the chief joys of her life. In all that he communicated to her there was little to interest her, except that he was contented. It was with some dismay, however, that she heard one evening that he felt most at home in a certain noble family who lived at some distance from Wildeneck, which circumstance had afforded her mother a pretext for breaking off the intercourse with them altogether, though she did not conceal the fact of her having

still other reasons for doing so, which, however, she never mentioned.

Count Zeschau and his family had moved into the neighborhood during Agatha's earliest childhood ; they had joined the circle of the pietists after thoroughly exhausting the pleasures of the world, and the father and mother personally had never given any cause for censure. This was, however, an easier thing for them than for the numerous daughters with whom their union had been blessed ; these were by no means dead to the world's pleasures, and a suspicious wavering on their part between worldiness and sanctity soon awakened the decided displeasure of Countess Promnitz. It was hardly once a year that she included the family of Count Zeschau in her round of visits. At length the young countesses were all married according to their rank, two to children of the world, three to pious husbands, with the exception of one, the handsomest of all. But she was also the one who had been most talked about, not only among the pietists, but also in the circles of the wicked world. She alone had remained single, and was now living as a so-called old maid in the house of her parents.

Countess Aurora had several times been engaged to be married, but on each occasion the connection had been dissolved without any cause ever having been made known. Repeatedly, too, scandal had accused her of equivocal love-intrigues, in which she was said by no means to have confined herself to her own rank. She had never, during her wild life, assumed the mask of piety. She would be absent for years, with relations in Breslau or Vienna, and, when she

came on a visit to her parents, she gave much offence, and that not only among the pious community, by horseback riding, hunting, and talking loudly wherever she went. But, about six or seven years ago, she had been converted by an eloquent young minister, and a change had come over her. Since then she had remained at home with her parents, had infused much more zeal into their lukewarm devotions, and banished, with iron rigor, all worldly practices which had gradually crept into their mode of life. In her consistency she soon ruled the whole house. Particularly among the maid-servants she maintained the strictest discipline. Even in church the glances of the red-cheeked among them were watched over by Countess Aurora, to see whether their traitor eyes did not perhaps wander toward some young fellow, in which case they had to undergo the punishment of a longer sermon at home than they had heard in church.

It was in this house, avoided by Countess Benigna, that the old count had met with a particularly cordial reception, and he could not say enough in praise of the kindness which the old lady there, as well as the young one, invariably showed him. He told with delight how they would always have the most comfortable easy-chair in readiness for him, and how the good Countess Aurora was wont to place a cushion at his back, which she herself had made for him. And then one could never tire of conversing with her. She had seen the world, and always had something to tell and to comment upon with edifying reflections. She had also entirely, on her parents' account, as the count declared, reintroduced a quiet domestic game of *l'hom-*

*bre*, and he had allowed himself to be persuaded to make the fourth in it, which certainly could not offend the spirit of his beloved Benigna, as they always, before sitting down to play, knelt around the table in prayer.

Agatha heard the good old gentleman's account with a feeling of shame. She was heartily glad of the little diversion for her poor father. But she beheld, in spirit, Moritz's slight sarcastic smile, and heard her mother's long sermon, expressed in mild words indeed, but accompanied by such grave, earnest looks, that husband and daughter would have bowed beneath them.

The second half of the mourning-year had passed in this way. The count went more and more frequently to Castle Wernersdorf; indeed, without Agatha being aware of it, for she considered it contrary to filial respect to watch her father's movements, he at length passed almost every afternoon there.

One morning, when Kerkow entered her room to clear the breakfast-table—she was in the habit of breakfasting alone with Carry, as the count took his coffee in bed—it struck her that, entirely contrary to his usual custom, he made much ado about his simple task. He placed the cups on the tray, took them off again, brushed the table-cloth, piled the cups together again, and could not come to an end.

She rose, took a book, and sat down in the sofa-corner to read, as was her wont, while Carry ran about the garden with her nurse.

"The good man is growing old," she thought, compassionately, as, a few minutes later, she saw Kerkow

still occupied at the table. "Even this slight service is beginning to be hard for him. What can I do for him?"

But when she observed that the old servant from time to time cast a furtive glance at her, and then leaned over the table again in some confusion, she asked kindly:

"What ails you, my dear Kerkow? Are you not quite well?"

"Thank your ladyship for the gracious inquiry," he answered quickly, "I am as well as I could ask the dear Lord to let me be at my age. But I—"

He stopped, embarrassed. "Well?" inquired Agatha, who had been accustomed from her childhood to the prolixities of the old man—"well, what is it? Can I do something for you? You know well, my good friend, that I am glad to do for you all that I *can* do."

The old man burst into tears. "That's just it," he said, leaving the table and coming nearer to her. "Your ladyship is so good, and to think what you will suffer when every thing is so changed here at the castle."

"Changed? What do you mean?" his mistress asked, in surprise. "I hope my father has not been taken ill in the night?" And she rose in alarm.

"Oh, no!" replied Kerkow, in a soothing tone, "his honor the count is very well, and looks quite fresh and good-humored, since the tailor from Breslau brought him his new clothes. But I am so sorry for your ladyship, and for the sake of my dear honored mistress that's dead!"

Agatha looked at him in bewilderment. "What is it, Kerkow? Speak without reserve."

"Well, your ladyship, Joseph" (the count's body-servant) "says they had a quiet betrothal at Castle Wernersdorf yesterday; and old Martin, the coachman that drove him yesterday (for Johann was sick), says it all happened just as Joseph told it, for he was up-stairs in the anteroom, and stood by the door, where he could see and hear every thing."

"Well," said Agatha, "how does that concern me?" But her heart beat audibly as she continued: "For my papa's sake, I am almost sorry that Countess Aurora has made up her mind to marry so late in life, for she is very entertaining, and her house will not offer so much attraction after she has left her poor aged parents. But to us it matters nothing what she may do."

Kerkow looked into her face. "Ah!" he said, honestly, "your ladyship is just as innocent as the dear little *comtesse* used to be, that I have so often carried about the garden in my arms. Don't your ladyship see? His honor the count has already got tired of his bachelor-life. And," he continued, with a fresh burst of tears, "our dear good sainted lady is hardly cold in her grave."

Agatha started up in alarm, and sunk back upon the sofa, unable to control herself. "It is not possible," she thought; "it is a piece of gossip of the servants. I will not believe it!" She begged Kerkow to leave her alone. "Oh, my mother, my mother!" she cried, weeping, "art thou so soon forgotten? Is thy place so soon to be filled?" She reproached her-



self for not having done *more* for her father since her mother left them. But who can act against his nature without constraint? She thought with pity of her poor lonely father. "It cannot be true," she consoled herself. "And Countess Aurora? What could have induced her to take this step? She must be thirty years younger than my father." But, ignorant of the ways of the world though she was, the answer yet intruded itself upon her, as it were. She knew that the family of Count Zeschau was not rich. Castle Wernersdorf would fall, on the death of the count (which could not be far distant), to the next male heir, a cousin in the second or third degree. An ample widow's dower was secured to the old countess, but the capital which would form the inheritance of the six daughters would hardly suffice, when divided into six parts, for a few years' pin-money for ladies of rank. The five married sisters might bear this with resignation, but for Countess Aurora there was nothing in prospect but a disagreeably dependent position in the house of one of her brothers-in-law, unless she found means to establish, before her parents' death, a household of her own.

Agatha's heart was very, very heavy. It had grown late, meanwhile. The hour when she generally bade her father good-morning had already passed by. She started, as she looked at the clock, left Caritas, who at other times always accompanied her, in the garden, and hastened to the saloon in which the count generally awaited her.

The old gentleman received her more kindly than ever, and seemed not to miss the child at all. She

was surprised to see that he was not dressed, as was usually the case at this hour, in his comfortable dressing-gown, but in his new suit of clothes. He had doffed his mourning habiliments a few days before. The light brown of his silk coat, which contrasted rather vividly with the crimson brocade of his waistcoat, made him appear younger at the first glance, but, on closer observation, caused his old, wrinkled face to look still older. When she seated herself, with beating heart, on the sofa by his side, he took her hand affectionately, and said, after an embarrassed pause:

"I wish, my darling daughter, that you would make up your mind to marry again."

"Dear papa, you know how often I have told you and my beloved, never-to-be-forgotten mamma, that that will never—never happen; that I should consider it a sin to contract a new marriage while my heart is in my dead husband's grave."

"Yes, my daughter, but your sainted mother herself proposed that we should spend the winters in Glogau again, or go to Berlin for a few months, so that you might make acquaintances, and not fade away here in obscurity; and we should have done so, if the dear Lord had not decreed otherwise, and recalled her precious soul to His heavenly kingdom."

"She would have yielded to my respectful resistance, as you will do, dear papa."

"'It is not good for man to be alone,' saith the Lord," observed the count, after a short, embarrassed pause.

"I am not alone, gracious papa, as long as I have Caritas and you"—for she saw plainly that he had something else to say, but was at a loss how to introduce it, and, for the first time in her life, a certain bitterness mingled with her filial love and respect—"and you, so long as you permit me to be your companion and nurse."

This cleared the way. The count came out, in confused words, with the avowal that he had, the day before, secured for himself another companion and nurse. He said he had fully intended to communicate the matter to her, his faithful daughter, beforehand, and consult with her about it, but that yesterday, he hardly knew how, he had convinced himself more than ever of the warm interest which the whole Zeschau family felt in him, and that Countess Aurora could really accommodate herself so well to his foibles, indeed, that she rather liked them, so that, when he offered her his hand, she had not even asked for time to consider the subject, as was the general custom. Quite accidentally, her parents and the village pastor had happened to enter the room just at that moment, and so the betrothal ceremony had taken place, quietly and simply, as was suitable for the count's venerable years, and before he was very well aware of it.

The count's embarrassed report served only to cast down Agatha all the more. Inexperienced though she was, she yet could plainly see that the fortress had been won by craft and storm, and that the good old man had been taken by surprise. But she respectfully restrained her feelings, and promised to

be ready at eleven o'clock to call with her father at Castle Wernersdorf.

But sad and constrained as she felt when she went there, she came back with far deeper sadness and far more perplexing fears in her heart; her clear vision had soon recognized in Aurora the dangerous hypocrite.

Countess Aurora still bore, in her forty-sixth year, the traces of great beauty, and her fashionable attire, which she had tastefully modified after the style of the pious sect to which she had for some years past belonged, was very becoming to her majestic figure. In the spiritual blending, too, of the contrasting interests which ruled her life, she could make herself agreeable enough when she chose to do so. But in her reception of Agatha her intentions were too apparent. She greeted the future "beloved madame her daughter," with such exaggerated tenderness, asked in terms of such boundless affection for little Caritas, whom she declared she already loved like her own child, expressed so eloquently her hopes of an intimate companionship, which would enable them all four, in a quiet existence, pleasing in the sight of God, to forget the evil world, that Agatha's pure heart gradually contracted convulsively. Almost more repulsive to her were the flatteries with which this artful woman deluded the poor count. While to Agatha it was almost painful to see the old red, yet wrinkled face, smiling from out the fashionable new wig, and to recognize the restraint put upon the thick stiff limbs by the unaccustomed stylish garments, she heard Aurora praise the youthful appearance

of the weak-headed old man, and perceived with sorrow how pleased he was with the compliment. A deep, tender pity for him arose in her heart, and she resolved to honor and love him more than ever.

She felt decidedly that she would have to conduct herself with the utmost precaution, as well as to avoid all close contact with this woman. She therefore asked her father, on the same evening, to grant her a favor. She begged him, as he would not find it unnatural that she wished for a certain degree of independence, to allow her in future to occupy, with her child, a small pavilion, which, as the style of the gardens of that time, laid out according to French taste, required, stood at some distance from the castle, at the end of the garden. The pavilion had never indeed served as a dwelling, and had only at times, on grand occasions, been used for drinking the afternoon coffee in its saloon. But the two smaller apartments adjoining the latter could easily be converted into bedrooms for Agatha and Caritas, with her nurse. For Kerkow there was room in one of the large chambers next the kitchen, in the basement. Agatha's maid could sleep at the castle, and come to her mistress at an early hour in the morning. She had arranged every thing in her mind before she laid her request before her father.

The count, after she had removed some objections—that the pavilion was not large enough or good enough for her; that she was not to be displaced in any way, etc—finally acquiesced, and gave orders already the next morning to have the pavilion furnished

as handsomely and comfortably as possible. Indeed, he was so kind and liberal in his directions, that Agatha was forced to restrain him. But she had to promise him one thing, i. e., that she would take her meals at the castle with her parents, and bring Caritas with her, whenever it was feasible or proper.

## CHAPTER X.

### SULTRY DAYS.

AFTER a short engagement, the wedding of the noble couple was celebrated with all the splendor and ceremony which were considered due to the high rank of the two families. That dancing and noisy wedding festivities should be excluded, was a matter of course with the avowed disciples of the school of Spenser. The new Countess Promnitz regarded Agatha's removal to the pavilion with decided displeasure, and endeavored to cause the scheme to be abandoned; but Agatha, however yielding she thought it her duty to be in other things, remained firm. And she had all the more reason to be satisfied with the arrangement, since Caritas, with a child's instinctive feeling, contracted a violent dislike to her new grandmother, repulsed her caresses with sulky rudeness, or at the most, if urgently admonished beforehand, or threatened with punishment for her obstinacy, submitted to a kiss with trembling resignation. Hence it was certainly the best policy to keep the little girl away from the castle as much as was compatible with the pleasure which her fond grandfather took in her. For Countess Aurora at length lost patience, and was not

wanting in severe remarks to the effect that "he that spareth his rod hateth his son."

Agatha found some degree of consolation in seeing that her father, who, as might have been expected, had soon fallen back into the senile habits of a man of seventy-six, was at least kindly cared for, and his comfort attended to, even though somewhat despotically. As a matter of course, she had delivered up the household keys to her step-mother, and yielded to her, as soon as she demanded it, such business as she had taken upon herself since her mother's death. She inquired, modestly, whether she might still retain the superintendence of the school, in which she had already assisted her mother while yet a child; but Countess Aurora quite resented the question, and asked, on her part, with scarlet face, "whether madame her daughter had any doubts of her benevolence?" At any rate, Agatha was forced to admire the activity and untiring energy of her step-mother. She soon saw her, not only at the head of the whole household, and housekeeper and maid-servants in constant dread of her sharp eye, but in the course of a few months Countess Aurora had also familiarized herself with the management of the whole estate, had gained a thorough oversight of all outstanding capital, and freed her husband from every care. It was she who examined the accounts of the stewards, who drew up the necessary papers for collecting other income, and merely handed them to the count for his signature, and who, after closely calculating their correctness, took strict charge of all the sums received

The worthy old gentleman had long been accus-



tomed to be led by female hands, but the consoling consciousness of being master in his own house had never been taken from him under his Benigna's wise guidance. He also retained enough outside occupation to help him pass away his time. But now he saw himself, not without a slight feeling of shame, deprived of all business, "from regard for his health," or "so as to save him trouble," without, however, suffering any more from *ennui* on that account; for Countess Aurora was inexhaustible in entertaining talk on various subjects, such as complaints of the unreliableness and sinfulness of the servants, or reminiscences of her former life, of the "wicked, sinful world," which were generally not wanting in the piquant flavor peculiar to the "*chronique scandaleuse*." The count, therefore, began by degrees to find his idle life quite comfortable, and, aside from this, he received at the end of each month a proof of the advantages of his second wife's household management, in her showing him, on the books, the amount of the income and expenses for that period, and convincing him how much the latter had diminished and the former had increased. How an increase was possible, without a far stricter rule than accorded with his views, he could hardly comprehend; but he was particularly surprised that his wife could save so much by lessened expenses, when he noticed no material change in the mode of housekeeping, except, perhaps, that he became aware, on the occasion of the necessary replenishing of the wine-cellar, of a difference which did not strike him quite pleasantly. It was this, that he had for some time been drinking inferior wine; but the countess insisted upon it that

the heavy, expensive Hungarian wines, which he had drunk heretofore, were injurious to him, and expressed such affectionate solicitude with regard to his health, that he could not but submit, though not without a sigh.

But what Countess Aurora did with the money thus saved was incomprehensible to him. On his once asking her about it, she answered him by a modest, down-cast look, with an insinuating kiss on the cheek, and the admonition to remember that the dear Lord Jesus has told us "not to let our left hand know what our right hand doeth."

And, indeed, it must be supposed that the countess did the good which she conferred on the poor very secretly, for no supplicants were allowed to show themselves at the castle, and the regular house-poor, whom Countess Benigna had accustomed to come thither for years past, were all turned away with the message "that the gracious countess wished to examine their cases anew before doing any thing for them," and had since found their way to the pavilion.

There is room for suspicion, therefore, that Countess Aurora exercised her benevolence during the lonely expeditions which she would from time to time undertake while her husband was enjoying his long afternoon nap. She would drive to a wood some distance off, through which a road led to a village which was nearer to Wernersdorf than to Wildeneck. Here she would alight, ordering the driver and lackey to wait for her, would walk out of sight, and, after remaining absent a couple of hours, would return by the same road. The men related the matter to the maids at

home, who puzzled their brains as to what the countess could have to do there. In the servants' room, where the new mistress was more feared than loved, the subject was thoroughly discussed in the evening. Stimulated by the girls, Jacob repeatedly resolved to follow his mistress secretly, but found it more convenient, as the heat of summer increased, to sleep away the time of her absence inside the carriage. The secret, therefore, remained unrevealed.

With so many domestic cares and the adjusting of old and new business matters, Countess Aurora had until now been quite resigned to the want of social intercourse which she experienced at Wildeneck, the pious neighborhood of which suited her less than the more mixed society about Wernersdorf. But as the cold season approached, she proposed to the count to resume his old habit of spending the winter months in Glogau. The house there was still empty, for in the middle of the last century it would have been considered very improper in Germany for a count of the empire to let his residence. But the count feared the inconvenience of moving, and refused the more decidedly, since he knew that he would not succeed in inducing Agatha to accompany them. He did not wish to lose his daily plaything, little Caritas, even for a few months.

The countess did not mention the matter again; but when, toward Christmas, the old gentleman fell ill, in consequence of an indigestion, the result of partaking immoderately of a favorite dish, his wife was so much alarmed, because there was no physician at hand, that he pitied her. When the doctor failed to

come, though she had dispatched messenger after messenger in quest of him, and a second, for whom in her anxiety the countess had sent her own carriage, only arrived, in consequence of the bad roads, when the patient was quite well again, he himself proposed, in order to spare her loving heart such agitations in future, to go to town for a few months after Christmas. The countess declared that she had quite given up her plan, but finally, from fear of a relapse on the part of the count, gave her consent.

She was too shrewd not to know that, without Agatha, her house would have few attractions for the young officers of the garrison. But she wished, during her short stay in town, to pave the way for a livelier, less monotonous life in summer, in doing which her chief object, aside from several others of minor importance, was to see Agatha married again. For, although she lived in perfect peace with her step-daughter, and they had never had even a word of disagreement, she was yet conscious that Agatha was not, nor ever could be, her friend. The unaffected, truly modest, womanly dignity of the latter was a constant silent reproach to her. For this reason alone, she would have been most desirous to remove Agatha from her father's house, even if her presence had not in other ways interfered with her plans.

The fame of the rich and beautiful young widow had long since spread over the whole country, and of course offered attractions enough to the young Prussian officers who had been brought to the neighborhood by the occupation of Silesia. But the family of Count Promnitz had, since the misfortune which Mo-

ritz's imprudence had brought upon them, lived in such seclusion that callers were very rarely admitted. Even the visits of condolence received after the death of the countess had only been returned by black-edged cards, and with the city, particularly, all communication whatever had been broken off.

Countess Aurora's skill and knowledge of the world, however, soon enabled her to put things back into their old track again, and to make the way to Wildeneck more accessible than it had ever been before. When the noble couple left town in spring, they were not sparing in invitations for the summer, which were accepted with hopeful thanks, and the first business of the countess on reaching home was to have the long-empty guest-chambers put in order for Wildeneck was almost too far from Glogau to be convenient for a mere call.

Agatha, meanwhile, had passed her time in complete solitude, and happy to a certain degree in her child, yet at times disturbed by anxious feelings. For, shortly before her father's departure, he had had a conversation with him, which had impressed her most unpleasantly. We know that she had formed the plan of founding an orphan asylum, which she had intended chiefly as a memorial of her mother. On her return from her unfortunate journey, she had wished to give up her claims to the annuity of fifteen hundred thalers which had been settled on her at her marriage, because, in the first place, the journey had cost several thousand thalers; and, secondly, she was again living, as in former days, at her parent's expense. But both her parents had refused decidedly to accept her

generous renunciation. Since then, as has been mentioned, she had used little more than the third part of her income, as she, in her solitude, dressed in the simplest way, and Caritas as yet needed no expensive instruction. She had therefore left the greater part of her money in her father's hands, and could count upon a sum of three or four thousand thalers.

Aside from this, she had been, since the death of her mother, in possession of a capital which amounted to about four times the above-mentioned sum; for the countess had made the provision in her will, that her husband, during his lifetime, should have the use of one-half of her income, while the other half fell to her daughter. Agatha thus thought herself mistress of nearly twenty thousand thalers, with which, in her opinion, a good beginning might be made. The site for the building had been chosen, and she intended to have the foundation laid as early as possible in the ensuing spring. She therefore modestly asked her father, as he was making his preparations for going to town, to give the necessary orders for her money.

He listened to her with some embarrassment, promised to attend to the matter on his return, and endeavored, in different ways, to give another turn to the conversation.

But when Agatha would not be put off, and repeatedly expressed the wish to defray some needful expenses connected with her plan before his return, he became annoyed, and at length explained to her, in confused words, that he was unable for the present, and would be for the next few months, to give her any or-

ders for such large sums; that the countess, her mother, had confessed to him, with tears, that she had contracted a debt of no inconsiderable amount before her marriage, in consequence of her parents having denied her the money for the acts of benevolence which the laws of Christian charity enjoined upon her as her duty, since she had learned to know the Lord. She had always hoped to pay the debt by saving up a part of her little income, but in vain; and now the pious gentleman who had lent her the money had himself been almost reduced to poverty by a fire, and she was forced to restore to him the sum which he had so generously confided to her Christian charity, but knew not how. This had caused her to weep the whole night, so that he, the count, too, had not been able to close his eyes; and she had given him no peace until he had made out a check for a certain sum, so that the poor man who had lent her the money need not suffer. She had brought the paper for it to the bed, and had held the candle while he signed it. It was nearly one o'clock in the morning, he having resisted her entreaties so long, because he did not happen to have much money at his disposal just then, and was very loath to touch Agatha's share. But, after that, he was at last able to go to sleep. But Agatha should not suffer by it. He only wished her to wait a little while, etc., etc.

Agatha listened to this explanation in silence, with downcast looks and the most painful feelings. She would not humiliate her poor father still more, but she saw clearly how matters stood, and into what hands the weak-minded old man had fallen. During her wintry solitude she had ample time to ask herself

for what possible purpose the countess could need so much money, and how far she might some day abuse her influence over her husband, to the disadvantage of his daughter and grandchild. Then there would creep over her a certain anxious consciousness of her totally unprotected situation, and the question would dimly arise in her mind, whether, after all, it might not be advisable, if a strong hand should at some future day be held out to her, for Caritas' sake, not to reject such a support.

But when spring, with the return of her parents, gradually filled the castle with visitors, who evidently came on her account, all the crafty adroitness of her step-mother hardly sufficed to induce her to enter into conversation with one or the other of them. The coarse manners of the country-gentlemen had always been repulsive to her, and, among the officers whose uniform her beloved husband had once worn, there was not one who, in point of mental cultivation and moral worth, could be in the least compared with the never-to-be-forgotten idol of her heart.



## CHAPTER XI.

### A NEW WORLD.

ABOUT this time, however, a foreign nobleman came into the neighborhood, upon whom the conversation of the visitors turned again and again, and in whom Countess Aurora, particularly, manifested an ill-concealed interest. This was Count Eric Balke, originally from Sweden, but more at home in France and England, and no stranger in Germany; for one of his uncles had fought in the army of Charles XII., and married a Polish-Silesian lady, who had brought him much landed property, which directly adjoined the estate of Count Zeschau. These had fallen, on the division of the inheritance of the childless couple, to one of the husband's nephews, Count Eric Balke.

This brought the young cavalier himself to Silesia shortly after, in the endeavor to sell the property profitably; but as he did not succeed in this, he had contented himself with renting it, and in spending the money which it brought him in France, or wherever else he could find a glimpse of refined culture. But now, having been drawn to Berlin by Frederick's fame, he had come once more into the neighborhood, with the intention of renewing his attempt at a sale.

On his former visit, more than eighteen years before, he had become the subject of general conversation, by engaging himself, after a short acquaintance, to the beautiful and brilliant Countess Aurora, about whom there had been much talk among high and low on the estates round about. Indeed, even shortly before, the evil tongues had been thrown into the fullest activity by a scarcely-veiled intrigue of the countess, at that time already no longer young, with a French adventurer of the worst reputation, and many an old gossip could not wonder enough that the count had not heard it talked about.

The betrothal had been celebrated with due solemnity, according to the custom of the time, and the wedding-day was fixed, when the connection was suddenly broken, and that by the gentleman, the family of the bride not venturing to lay claim to any public satisfaction. The count, however, treated the matter with perfect discretion, and left the country without making the slightest attempt to justify himself by the revelation of his motives. Aurora left home for a while, and the matter was forgotten, until her marriage with Count Promnitz recalled this and several subsequent adventures of hers to the memory of the neighborhood.

When Countess Aurora first heard of Count Balke's return, she was evidently in some excitement as to whether he would call on her, or allow their former relations still to have some influence on him. Her eyes sparkled, therefore, when, one morning, his carriage drove up, and a servant in French livery inquired whether his honor might take the liberty of

paying his respects to madame the Countess of Promnitz.

Agatha happened to be present when she received him. She was rather surprised to see with what delight her step-mother welcomed him, for she hardly knew that they had ever been acquainted, and was perhaps the only female in the neighborhood who had never heard of the broken engagement, for her mother carefully kept every thing that came within the limits of scandal away from her, even when she was still a little girl. Thus her step-mother's whole former history had remained entirely unknown to her, and it was only her innate moral feeling which had always kept her at a distance from the latter, even in matters which are generally familiarly discussed among women, she could hardly herself tell why. The stranger, however, made a very favorable impression also upon her, and she listened to the observations of the much-travelled man of the world, well versed in the knowledge of human nature, with pleasure and silent admiration. The embarrassment which she had felt, on first meeting him, disappeared by degrees, under the influence of his refined manners and the skill with which, without any apparent intention, he induced her again and again to join in the conversation. No long, admiring gaze, such as had of late annoyed her only too much, showed her that he was impressed by her beauty, and when her step-mother, on their guest's departure, urged upon him a speedy repetition of his call, she was sufficiently at her ease to add that she too would be pleased to see monsieur the count again.

As there were not decent inns, only low village

taverns, in the vicinity, Count Balke had been obliged, for the time which his business forced him to spend in that part of the country, to appeal to the hospitality of some of the neighboring noblemen, as was, indeed, the custom at that period in Silesia. He spent a week at one house, a second at another; but Countess Aurora would not let him leave her without the promise that he would honor her and her husband by visiting them also, when he had fulfilled the engagements already made, and the count accepted her hospitable invitation with gratitude.

But, before that time came, he did not fail to make repeated calls of several hours' length, at which Agatha made her appearance with pleasure, several times even before her step-mother had sent for her, which, however, the latter but rarely forbore to do.

On one occasion she found the two—the old count was resting from his manifold business by a long afternoon nap—so deeply absorbed in conversation that they did not notice her entering the room. She was somewhat surprised to see Count Balke bow over her step-mother's hand and imprint a kiss upon it, while a crafty smile lit up the lady's features quite becomingly. Agatha receded involuntarily, with the intention of discreetly awaiting the close of this familiar interview in the adjoining room. The latter was the chief saloon of the castle. It had a door opening on the balcony, which was also overlooked by the windows of the other room, an apartment likewise used for the reception of visitors, but serving more for the daily private use of the Countess Aurora. Agatha stepped out upon the balcony, and as, in walking to and fro

upon it, her eye fell upon one of the windows, she saw the count signing a paper on his knee, and her step-mother standing before him holding the inkstand, which she had just taken from the open writing-desk.

"Come in, madame daughter," the latter cried, on seeing her. "Monsieur the count only came for a short call to-day, and Christian charity has emboldened me to attack him with a request to contribute to a collection which I am taking up for a poor family, as I am wont to do. And monsieur the count has subscribed most generously. Ah, yes, it is more blessed to give than to receive! For years, now, that has been my only pleasure in this wicked world."

Agatha was not surprised at never before having heard any thing of this poor family, for she was accustomed to the mysterious manner in which her step-mother distributed her charities. The slight, sarcastic smile of the count did not escape her, but that too the dear innocent had repeatedly seen upon his face without understanding it. Soon after, he took his leave, with the promise of returning in a few days, for a longer stay. And Agatha looked forward to this prospect with pleasure.

For it was not to be denied that the dull monotony of her life weighed somewhat heavily on the young widow of hardly twenty-three. She would sew, knit, read, play upon her old harpsichord; but her stock of books and music was small, and she had no one to direct her fruitless reading, or her musical exercises. The conversation of the pietistic circles in which she had grown up was no less tedious to her than the shal-

low, empty discourse, at the most rendered spicy by a certain frivolity, of the persons who had been introduced to the castle since her father's second marriage. The intercourse with her child was her only enjoyment. But what sensible person can play forever with a child of three or four? Count Balke's conversation was no less instructive than agreeable. He had travelled much, read a great deal, and was through and through a man of the world. With admirable tact he managed to make his discourse interesting to both ladies, and even the old count rarely went to sleep in his presence. He had something agreeable to say to each one, and those whom he flattered were not conscious that it was mere flattery which he bestowed upon them.

One thing, in particular, which inclined Agatha favorably toward him, was his affectionate treatment of Caritas, whose confidence he had won completely. When he took the child upon his knee and told her about the Tower of London, and the terrible lion in it, and the little dog which was thrown to him, and described the trembling of the little creature, and the generosity of the lion, and the increasing courage of the little dog, and the familiar companionship of the two, the child's large, spiritual eyes—ah! they were her father's eyes—seemed almost about to devour the narrator; and when he reached the tragic end of the story, how the little dog died, and the lion mourned for it and would take no nourishment, and the child sprang weeping from the count's knee, to sob out her grief on her mother's lap—a spectator might have thought it a picture of domestic happiness, and taken

the count for the husband and father of the little family.

Nevertheless some of my female readers will hardly be surprised that Agatha, young and inexperienced as she was, never thought of looking upon the count in the light of a lover. His fashionable wig, his gorgeous silk attire, even his polite manners, which were far from all foppery, did not make the man of fifty appear a single year younger in her eyes. When, therefore, one day, as she happened to be alone with him, he took the opportunity of making her, in the most respectful manner, a declaration of his affection, and an offer of his hand, she was in the highest degree surprised. But, without a moment's hesitation, though not without some embarrassment, she replied that she thanked him for his confidence, but was firmly resolved never to marry again.

The count, however, was too well versed in the female heart to allow himself to be discouraged by his want of success in his first attempt. He was not without vanity; but that false pride, common to many men, which considers itself *humiliated* by a rejection of their hand by the lady of their choice, that self-love which looks upon a refusal as a sort of *disgrace*, these were entirely foreign to his nature. He had for the moment hardly expected a different result. His plan was made, and she found him, during the remainder of his stay at the castle, the same sympathizing friend and agreeable companion that he had been before the explanation between them.

Agatha, however, when she reflected upon the subject in her lonely room, began to reproach herself—al-

though she did not feel guilty—for having allowed matters to go as far as an offer. “It is just the consequence,” she said to herself—for it was only herself whom she judged so severely—“of my having given myself up so entirely to the pleasure of his society, and turned my mind away from my duties.” She accused herself of having forgotten or neglected her plan of the orphan asylum from this cause, although the dread of speaking of the matter again to her father had had more to do with the fact that it had been crowded somewhat into the background, than the count’s visit.

She therefore conquered that foolish dread, and on the following day took the opportunity of her being alone with her father for a while, to remind him of his promise to give full attention to her affairs after his return to Wildeneck.

The old gentleman seemed at first to have forgotten the whole matter. When, in her gentle, patient way, she once more explained every thing to him, he became vexed, muttered something about useless trouble, and that there were enough orphan asylums in the world, and the like, but finally promised to speak to his wife about it. When Agatha, upon this, answered, with some irritation, “It is your affair, dear papa, and mine, and my step-mother has nothing to do with it,” he grew still more excited, and asked, in a more angry voice than she had ever heard from him before, whether she thought that her money was not safe in his hands, or that he was about to rob her of it.”

In tears, but with indignant feelings, she returned to her room. For the first time in her life, perhaps,



she felt thoroughly *desolate*, and the conviction forced itself upon her that she and Caritas stood in need of a friend, a stay, and a support. She waited in vain for her father to broach the subject again; she even noticed that he avoided being alone with her. But she could see that her wish had been discussed by her parents, from Countess Aurora's flushed face and distant manner toward herself. The latter, however, became convinced that still stronger measures were needed, to drive her step-daughter from the house, and to remain mistress of the field.

Count Balke, meanwhile, had concluded his sale, and announced his intention soon to leave the neighborhood and return to Paris. A short absence of a few days was still necessary for the final arrangement of his business. He could be quite easy in leaving Countess Aurora to play the game by herself for a while, for he knew her too well not to feel certain that she would stake every thing to escape the obligation of venturing to return to him a certain document in which he promised, upon his honor, to pay over to her the sum of a thousand thalers, if she succeeded in persuading her step-daughter to accept him.

The conquered part of Silesia had now been for years a Prussian province. But the institutions existing throughout the kingdom were only introduced here by degrees, and just now the period had arrived when a change was to be made in the judiciary administration of the new province. A new judicial functionary was sent from Berlin, and Rauschwitz appointed as his residence. But it was difficult, nay, impossible, to find suitable apartments for him imme-

diately. Several of the hospitable proprietors of the neighborhood had offered him rooms in their mansions, but he had politely refused all invitations, as he wished to be quite independent. For the moment he hired a couple of miserable rooms in the village tavern, which were but ill suited to a man of refinement and cultivation like him.

Aurora had made repeated attempts to induce Agatha to remove to the castle, but in vain. Now, however, she represented to her husband, with vehemence, the indignity of allowing the strange gentleman, who was a nobleman into the bargain, to live at a low public-house. The castle was half-empty, and, if Agatha were not so obstinate, he might occupy the pavilion. He would not, of course, be willing to take it without pay, but they might give the rent to the poor, and thus earn a reward in heaven.

But the count could not be induced to make such a proposition to Agatha. The whole idea of *letting* any of his property was contrary to his feelings as a nobleman. And, moreover, he had taken a dislike to Prussian justice, and all its officials, since his son-in-law's misfortune, although they had little enough to do with the court-martial which had condemned Moritz. Enough, he remained firm on this occasion, and Countess Aurora resolved to speak to her step-daughter herself, and put an end to the matter.

Agatha was not a little surprised at a visit from her step-mother. With indignation in her heart, yet in a respectful tone, she refused decidedly to leave her place of refuge. But the Countess Aurora left no means untried.

"Madame daughter," she said, "it is a sin and a shame to treat a worthy nobleman as we treat him. And it is a sin against our dear Lord Jesus, that we deprive the poor of the aid which we might give them with the rent received for this pavilion. Besides, it is the deepest mortification for me, that you are not willing to live at the castle, and under the same roof with me. Will not the world think that it is I who have driven you from your father's house? And what do you suppose the neighborhood says about it, that a young lady like you lives here all alone, with no one to guard her and her honor? There are enough whispering and gossiping about it already. To be sure, madame my daughter must have her reasons! Not that I would say a word against you! But not every one is so delicate and so considerate, when a young woman's honor is concerned. I would not wish to offend madame my daughter, but, I cannot deny it, I have often seen people put their heads together and heard them whispering in church when madame my daughter entered."

Agatha sat like one stupefied at the torrent of words that was poured out upon her. But this last blow was too severe. She burst into tears, and, wringing her hands, exclaimed in a low voice: "Oh, my mother, my mother!"

At this moment little Caritas, who had been playing in the next room, rushed out from the half-open door, her little hands, clinched, and cried in childish rage: "You bad woman, be still! You shall not always make my mamma cry!"

Countess Aurora stood in speechless fury. Agatha

quickly seized the little girl, called to the nurse from the window, and gave her the screaming child, with the injunction to take it into the garden; but the storm now broke out again with its fullest force.

"So, madame daughter, this is the Christian training which you give your child! This is the way in which you set her against the poor woman whom your father has given you for a mother, and to whom you at least owe some respect, even though you reward all her love and care with the blackest ingratitude!"

"Madame mother," Agatha interrupted the angry woman, in a conciliating tone, "you are really mistaken. I have never complained of you to my child. I pray you to forgive the little girl, who became excited at seeing me weep."

"Yes, she saw you weep tears of reproach. If that is not setting her against me, I don't know what it is. Oh, Agatha, Agatha," she continued, herself breaking out into tears, which were ever at her command, "is it not enough for you to have aspersed me to my dear husband, so that he withdraws from me all his love, and will no longer follow my advice in any thing? What a misfortune it is for a woman, when others step between her and her beloved husband!"

"Madame mother," cried Agatha, "this is a terrible accusation. I have never uttered even a single word against you to my father—never to any one."

But the torrent of words of the countess, who had intentionally wrought herself up into excitement, still rushed on:

"We are so happy and peaceful together when we

are alone! I could not wish for a better husband, even though he is as old again as I am. And I don't wish to praise myself, but every one must see that the dear old man could not have a wife who would take better care of him and treat him more affectionately than I do. But when others come between us, when others interfere—"

"Madame mother," interrupted Agatha, in order to put an end, if possible, to these insulting remarks, "if you fear my influence on my father, why are you so bent on drawing me out of my solitude? Why do you grudge me the peaceful quiet in which I am living here?"

"Why?" the other broke out, and a diabolical smile distorted her face—"I will tell you why, my gracious Widow von Hohenhorst! Because I will not bear this scandalous state of things any longer. Because all the world knows that it is entirely contrary to nature that young widows should live for years in total seclusion, and that the devil torments them quite as much as the papist nuns in their convents, if some older pious woman does not watch them or the fear of evil report hold them back. Here in this lonely summer-house, indeed, madame my daughter is quite undisturbed—"

Agatha's beautiful, innocent eyes had gazed upon the furious woman at the beginning of this horrible speech in amazement, and without the least comprehension of her meaning. Suddenly a dim light broke in upon her as to what these venomous words were intended to convey. She rose quickly, in the full pride of womanly dignity.

"I should degrade myself by listening to you any longer," she said, with a look of the deepest contempt, as she went into the adjoining bedroom and bolted the door behind her. She stopped her ears with her hands, so as not to understand the invectives which the other sent after her. Thus she sunk into an arm-chair, and sat there a long while, trembling and pale, until she at length heard the outer door of the pavilion flung to violently, and could be certain that the venom of the dangerous serpent would no longer bespatter her.

Then she returned to her sitting-room, hoping to feel less oppressed in a larger apartment. She walked to and fro, stopped at the window without looking out of it, and again walked to and fro; but her excitement did not abate. "What can I do," she said to herself, "to guard myself against this horrible woman? I cannot, ought not to live with her any longer. And must I go out alone into a strange world, poor, inexperienced creature that I am? Must I go unprotected from my father's house, and leave the old man in such hands?"

She again paced the room in violent emotion. She reached a side-window, which looked out upon a short avenue leading to a large iron gate. The latter opened on the public road. In the open gate stood Caritas with her nurse, who was wont to frequent this spot with her charge, because she was more interested in watching the occasional passers-by than in the lonely quiet of the garden. A travelling-carriage was just passing. It was that of Count Balke, who was returning from his excursion.

Agatha saw how the child recognized him and ran toward him with noisy glee, how the count leaned out, lifted the little one into the carriage and placed her upon his knee, while he directed the nurse to go through the garden to the main portal and receive the child there. It seemed to her as if she could hear Caritas's clear voice shouting joyfully.

She fell into a deep, mournful reverie. "Perhaps," she said to herself, "perhaps, I ought not to have said 'No,' after all. He would have been a wise, kind father for my child, and a guide and protector through life for me. But it is too late now."

None but a soul so pure and guileless as hers, a woman so entirely free from every trace of coquetry, could think that it was "too late." The experienced wooer knew better. When they met again, his eye was so often turned in affectionate sympathy upon her pale face, that she could hardly be unprepared when, already on the following day, he took advantage of her softer mood to renew his proposals. Agatha did not say "No," but asked for a few days to consider the matter. The impatient lover made his appearance at the pavilion the next morning, asked for the third time, and was accepted. When he clasped her in his arms in rapture, she said, with tears, while leaning on his breast, "Dear friend, be my guide, my protector, my master, be a kind father to my orphan child! I will be a faithful, loving, obedient wife to you!"

Thus Agatha did not conceal from her zealous wooer the motives which prompted her acceptance, and was conscious of acting with perfect honesty. The

count, indeed, would have preferred to have this charming woman love him as she had loved Moritz, yet he was contented as it was; for all his worldly experience had not robbed him of his faith in female virtue, and he was well aware that a man of fifty could no longer lay claim to youth, of which he held an enthusiastic, romantic, heart-absorbing love to be one of the most precarious privileges, which must necessarily end in disappointment.

Perhaps, too, he was consoled by the consciousness that his own motives in suing for the hand of the fair widow had not been the purest in the world. His chief wish, indeed, had been to secure in her a beautiful, affectionate, and perfectly virtuous wife for his declining years; but it was known in the whole surrounding country that the daughter of Count Promnitz and Countess Reuss was a rich heiress. Count Balke had diminished his income considerably by his travels, extravagant purchases of works of art, and a bachelor-life in Paris, spiced with pleasures of every kind. A rich marriage, therefore, seemed to him most advisable. In France this was a ticklish matter. Although he had become a thorough Frenchman, as far as culture and general opinions were concerned, he had yet remained a perfect *Swede* on one point. He required purity and strict morality in his wife. Nor was he wanting in the sense of what he owed to such a one, if she was of noble birth. He therefore discarded, before leaving Paris, the young actress whom he had hitherto kept as his mistress—more because such was the fashion, than because he was attached to her—and succeeded in placing her advantageously



under the protection of a friend without being obliged to make any great pecuniary sacrifice. On his journey to Germany, which he was obliged to undertake on account of the sale of his Silesian property, he had intended to look about him for a wife, and had now reached his end with an unexpectedly favorable result.

Agatha's money matters were speedily arranged with her parents by the count. To him Aurora granted unresistingly what had been denied her step-daughter; for she was aware that *he* would know how to obtain it by force, and, moreover, she now had the entire control of the old gentleman, whose mental faculties were diminishing more and more.

Since her step-mother's horrible attack, Agatha had placed herself in a perfectly distant, dignified relation to her, and had never remained alone with her a moment. But it was with the deepest pity that she thought of her poor father, and endeavored, by filial caresses, to reawaken his former tenderness for her. On one occasion—it was three days before her wedding—she went to his private room, with the intention of having an hour's chat with him. On opening the door softly, so as not to wake him in case he should be asleep, she saw her step-mother standing by the table, on which lay spread out several letters which a messenger had just brought from the post-office of the neighboring town to the castle. Countess Aurora stood with her back to the door, but the mirror opposite her showed Agatha her face scarlet and angry, and her eyes fixed upon a letter which she held in her hand.

At the slight noise occasioned by Agatha's en-

trance, she turned round hastily and crushed the letter in her clinched hand ; then, with an equally hasty movement, she snatched up an envelope which lay before her on the table, and tore it into a thousand pieces.

"Is my father here?" asked Agatha, softly.

"He is still asleep," answered the countess, in the same tone, without looking at her.

Agatha went to the table, and looked at the letters, to see if there was one for her among them. Then she left the room as softly as she had entered, without bestowing much thought on her step-mother's violent agitation, for she was used to such paroxysms in her. It was only many, many years later that she had cause to remember this scene, as well as another circumstance, which was only too closely connected with it, although, at the time, she could have no suspicion of this fact.

That same afternoon, Countess Aurora drove to town, to call for a gold chain which the count intended as a wedding-present for his daughter, because the jeweller, who had promised to send it that morning, had not kept his word. It was in vain that the count tried to dissuade her from going, as there were yet two or three days before the wedding. He could not keep her back. She was hardly gone, when the chain arrived. But the countess did not return until late in the evening.

Agatha left Wildeneck with a heavy heart. All the memories of her youth were associated with it. It had been the scene of her brief happiness, it was the last resting-place of her beloved mother, and, alas! the desecrated home of her poor old father. But she never

for a moment had cause to repent of the step she had taken. Her husband treated her with the utmost affection and esteem, and was the kindest of fathers to her child. In her close companionship with him, her mind developed, as in that with Moritz, with marvellous rapidity, only in a different way. He travelled with his young wife in Switzerland and Italy, before settling down with her in Paris, and under his guidance these travels became a real school of culture for her. She grew daily more attached to her husband, and it was her earnest endeavor to conform to his wishes in every thing, and subject her will to his own. Only her mode of viewing things differed more and more widely from his the more she developed inwardly, for a firm moral principle lay at the foundation of all her opinions and judgments, while his thoughts and actions were based upon a subtle selfishness.

But the count, as he became more intimately acquainted with his wife, and learned to esteem her more highly, made no attempt to alter her mode of thinking. On the contrary, he carefully guarded her, in the frivolous society of Paris, from every thing that could offend her, and took pains to introduce her only into such circles as upheld, if not the strictest morals, yet at least a perfectly moral outward decorum. Agatha breathed more freely, and rejoiced in being no longer at Wildeneck. But, when her husband revealed to her more and more of Aurora's past, she thanked God that he had withdrawn her in time from the poisonous influence of this terrible woman.

The count confessed, laughingly, that the beauty of this arrant coquette had at one time drawn him into

her net; that he had soon, however, discovered her unworthiness, but had been at a loss how to dissolve the betrothal which had been already solemnized and made public. A letter accidentally found by him had fortunately given him ample cause to do so.

Many years ago, when her youth perhaps still entitled her to pity, Countess Aurora had formed a connection, which effected her ruin, with a Frenchman, a professional gambler, with whom she had become acquainted in Vienna. A waiting-woman of low character was paid to cover her shame. The young countess, by her intrigues and through the influence of her parents, had found means to obtain a curacy for a worthless licentiate who filled the post of school-master in the neighborhood, and affixed the condition thereto that he should marry her waiting-maid. In this disreputable family her children were brought up. Even while they were still small, she found it difficult to defray the necessary expenses, and at the same time satisfy the unceasing claims which the paid parents laid upon her. Added to this, her former lover, whom she had met from time to time at one or another watering-place, before she joined the pious community, applied to her, whenever he was unfortunate at play, for a loan, and rarely without threatening to make public certain letters in case of a refusal. When, finally, her oldest son grew up, and had to be put in the way of supporting himself, she hardly knew what to do. This was the time of her marriage with Count Promnitz; and her secret expeditions, her household economy, and her insatiable thirst for money, were thus in a measure explained.

Whether Count Balke, in lifting for his young wife the curtain which had concealed from her this foul picture, also told her of the written promise which he had given her step-mother as to how he would reward her coöperation in the accomplishment of his designs upon Agatha's hand, is to be considered rather doubtful.

Agatha had been married two years, when her father died. The count was much dismayed, when it was proved, on the opening of the will, that the weak-headed old man had left to his wife the unlimited use of his whole property during her lifetime, and to Agatha only a small capital. The expenses of travelling and of his household had exceeded his income, and he had not been able to escape debts of considerable amount, which he had hoped to pay on the death of his father-in-law, which could not be far distant. Agatha, indeed, now entered into full possession of her mother's property, but this seemed hardly sufficient, and considerable embarrassment would have been inevitable, if an expedient had not unexpectedly presented itself.

Count Balke had a distant relative in Sweden, named Count Kronhelm, who, but a short time before, rejoiced in the possession of three healthy sons. One of them, who was married, though childless, had been killed a few months previous in a frivolous duel. A second had fallen in battle at about the same time in the French service. The third was snatched away by a typhus fever, and the old father died of a broken heart, in consequence, after so short an illness that his distant cousin had not had time to hear of the death of the youngest son, and the intelligence of the de-

mise of both reached France at the same time. Count Balke was the next heir, and found himself, quite unexpectedly, possessed of considerable estates; but the will of his dying relative joined to the inheritance the condition that the heir should take the name of Kronhelm, so that it might not die out.

The thought of returning to Sweden, which he was obliged to do, in order to take possession of the property, was very unpleasant to Count Balke. He was a royalist by principle. The oligarchy, at that time reigning in Sweden, he detested from the bottom of his soul. He despised a king like the dotard Frederick of Hesse, a toy of the alternately ruling parties, one day subjected to the brutality of the Russian ambassador, and another to the arrogance of the French envoy. The manners and customs of Sweden had long since become foreign to him. The high nobility, one portion of which was in the pay of England and Russia, the other in that of France, seemed to him more corrupted than French society of the same rank, without compensating for it by the agreeable manners of the latter. On his last visit to his native land, these over-powerful magnates had just split into two factions, both equally mercenary, and his friends had endeavored in vain to draw him into the conflict. Since then, one after the other of them had been forced to lay his head on the block, while others among them had risen to high dignities, according as the *Hats* or the *Caps* had won the victory. The storms continued; the old puppet-king still sat upon his tottering throne, and there was no prospect, however distant, of more quiet times.

The count therefore resolved, as his removal was for the moment absolutely necessary, to make his stay in the barbaric North as short as possible. His wife was more willing to go than he. She wished to give the two little sons which she had borne him a country of their own. At the beginning of our story we have shown, however, how the residence in Sweden of the Kronhelm family, for thus they were called henceforth, came to be involuntarily prolonged.

## CHAPTER XII.

### DOMESTIC SCENES.

WE have now led our readers back to the period at which we left Countess Agatha Kronhelm in a strangely-excited mood. It might have been supposed that the political condition of her new country, and the state of its affairs, so revolting to her moral feelings, would have laid claim to her unlimited sympathy; and, in fact, the interest which she took in these subjects, did somewhat crowd into the background her offended maternal sensitiveness; only that the strangely-mysterious obscurity which surrounded the tutor, whom, however, she saw but little of, did not cease to disturb her.

The audacity of the *Hats*, i. e., the triumphant party; seemed to have reached its extreme height. Their outrageous arrogance had culminated in the nomination of a committee from the Estates, which had at the same time legislative and executive power, placed unlimited authority in the hands of a thoroughly corrupt oligarchy of the nobility, and robbed the king of the last remaining shreds of his purple, while it put the people in chains, and punished every protest, nay, even every complaint, as a crime. For



some years after his return, Count Kronhelm had endeavored to keep aloof from both parties, but in course of time had attached himself more to the *Caps*, as they, for the moment the less powerful faction, took pains to keep up the royal dignity, at least to some degree. He was aware that they were bought by Russia, as the others by France. His personal sympathy for the latter did not bias his judgment. It seemed to him a so much better policy for Sweden, to maintain peaceful relations with their *Russian* neighbor, than to pay an army with French money, in order to war against him, that his activity in this respect bound him to the *Caps*. He was all the more indignant, therefore, when he saw the most corrupt among his own party uniting with the *Hats* in attempting to persuade the weak king to join the opponents of Frederick the Great. He allowed himself to be induced to take part, although with great caution, in the enterprise of Counts Brahe and Horn, who were secretly endeavoring to bring about, if not an entire change in the constitution, yet an amelioration of it.

At this period, weary of oppression, the peasants, too, rose at length, and Agatha could see distinctly how Mannsfeld's interest was only now thoroughly aroused. When, in his conversations with her husband, he defended the rights of the people with generous warmth, and the count refuted his "Rousseauian views," as he called them, by monarchic-aristocratic principles, she would listen attentively, and a voice within her said: "Just so my Moritz would have thought, just so he would have spoken."

The disturbances among the peasants were soon suppressed, and the leaders thrown into prison, whenever they could not escape by flight. But it soon became obvious that the feelings of the whole nation were in revolt. With the commencement of the new year, men of all conditions of society were arrested—officers, clergymen, government officials, and, after a brief trial, some of them were sentenced to ignominious corporeal punishment, others cruelly executed.

Agatha was beside herself. She longed more and more fervently to exchange the vicinity of the bloody scene of action for her rural solitude. Already, in May, when the deep snow still lay in the streets of Stockholm, she left town with her children and their tutor for her country residence, where she would at least escape the daily intelligence of new acts of despotism. The boys were delighted. The count himself persuaded his wife to leave town so early, and his connection with the leaders of the suspicious movements was so secret and so loose, that she could part from him without actual anxiety. Her husband wished at first that she should go to Rödskrita, one of the large family estates of the Kronhelms, which, situated in the interior, offered great attractions for a summer residence. But she could not make up her mind to go so far away from him. She had no cause to be concerned about his safety. And yet it suddenly seemed to her as if she were wronging him, by leaving him alone under such uncertain circumstances. She burst into tears, as she bade him farewell, without herself being able to explain the feeling of anxiety which overcame her. She observed that Mannsfeld

too seemed to be in a state of subdued excitement, and to leave town reluctantly.

In the lonely domestic life which the family led in their not very roomy country-house, as long as the season kept them mostly in-doors, he could not, indeed, withdraw so decidedly from her society as had been the case in town. Without any plan whatever, even without any fixed intention, Agatha employed all her amiability for the purpose of conquering the peculiarly reserved mood of this singular misanthrope. The children's devotion to him seemed to increase daily. The tact with which he contrived to combine his condescension to them with the proper degree of strictness was worthy of all admiration.

Caritas, in particular, attached herself with unconcealed enthusiasm to her tutor. Her mind had already developed considerably under his guidance. She read much, and with deep interest, but every book was laid aside immediately when Mannsfeld entered the room. His opinions, his views, even in the common things of every-day life, had become her own, without her knowing it. She had always had a preference for red; but since she had heard Mannsfeld say, on one occasion, that he liked *blue* better, she too inclined toward that color, without, however, being influenced by the least trace of girlish coquetry; for it was Eric whom she persuaded to adorn his hat with a *blue* ribbon, instead of the red one, which he had previously chosen on her advice.

Her mother had often tried to cure her of a bad habit of stepping too heavily in walking. A few disapproving remarks of Mannsfeld's on her stamping

tread, which was unbecoming in a woman, sufficed to make her take pains to step more lightly. As is often the case with girls of her age, she was not fond of walking, and very apt to avoid all physical exertion, but now she joined of her own accord in the rambles which Mannsfeld undertook with the vigorous boys, and declared that nothing did her more good than bodily exercise.

From the beginning, she had taken part in the boys' Latin lessons, but had naturally so soon outstripped her brothers, that her tutor was forced to instruct her separately in this branch as in all others. He also taught her English, and introduced her into the outer court of German literature, which was just then beginning to open slowly. The first and most beautiful cantos of Klopstock's "Messiah" had for some years past encouraged the Germans to hope that the heights of Parnassus were accessible to them also. Mannsfeld read portions of the poem to his impressible pupil. Enraptured, she went to her mother, and told her that she was now to become acquainted with the beautiful poem of which she had told her the same evening on which her dear tutor had arrived. Agatha expressed a wish to take part in the readings, and an evening hour, when the boys would be in bed, was appointed.

This hour became a precious one for both mother and daughter. While the young girl gave expression to her feelings in rapturous words, Agatha sat silent, struggling with her tears. The poem itself breathed the pious spirit with which she was familiar; but aside from this, Mannsfeld's manner of reading re-

called to her with magic power her short dream of happiness. Mannsfeld's voice was deeper and fuller than that of her beloved dead; but nevertheless its tone summoned up the latter almost forcibly from the obscurity of the fifteen years that had passed since she had heard it. She sat listening, her head resting on her hand, as she leaned her elbow on the work-table beside her, her eyes filled with heavy tears. Mannsfeld ceased reading. After a while she looked up, and saw that his eye rested upon her with an expression of deep, painful feeling, almost as in compassion.

"What a singular man!" she thought. "I believe this is the first time that he has manifested any interest in me. I almost think that if I were to be more cordial toward him, if I tried to win his confidence, his strange mistrust would disappear, and he would acknowledge more gratefully that he has a true friend in me."

But she soon had occasion to convince herself that all her complaisant kindness was of no avail. She took several opportunities of asking him, with interest, about his experiences, the place of his birth, his relatives, the strange fate which had led him to the East, and into the Persian army. But she received nothing but short, respectful answers, and the more cordial the interest she showed him, the more reserved and inaccessible he became.

Thus it was not unnatural that Agatha's sympathy with him became mingled gradually with some degree of bitterness; the more, since she saw plainly that he appeared entirely different when with Caritas; that he responded to the young girl's enthusiastic attachment for him by a certain respectful cordiality, and

that the relation between the two became closer and closer.

The daughter's position with regard to her mother was hardly affected thereby. Nevertheless, a sort of jealousy began to find room in Agatha's heart. "He shall at least not rob me of my child," she said to herself, with irritated sensitiveness, while conscious, at the same time, that she was wronging him. "But no, it is I myself who am keeping the dear girl at a distance from me. Caritas is no longer a child. She is ripe for my confidence." She had never, until now, told her more than the mere outline of the story of her first marriage and her heart-rending loss. One evening she summoned the girl to her room, for a confidential conversation.

She took from her cabinet a little box, in which, on the day before her second marriage, she had placed, with scalding tears, Moritz's last dear letter, and all the little gifts which she had received from him during their brief companionship. A small locket alone, containing a lock of hair which she had once cut from his head in jest, before the hair-dresser had freshly powdered it and tied the inevitable cue, she had kept out, and wore it constantly hanging by a small black cord hidden in her bosom. She gave Carry the letter to read, and, showing her all those dear mementos, took occasion from them to communicate to her the closer details of the sad history of her life.

The young girl was deeply, strongly moved. To her enthusiastic mind her revered mother seemed truly sublime in her heroic expedition, and all the dangers to which, when hardly nineteen, she had voluntarily

exposed herself. "How she must have loved my father!" she thought; "and what happiness there must be in thus loving!"

She hardly slept that night, shed many tears, and her fancy was excited in the highest degree. The following day was that of her lesson in geography. Caritas came into the school-room with eyes thickly swollen with weeping. Mannsfeld's glance repeatedly rested upon her with sympathy while he gave the boys their lesson. When it was ended, he sent them into the next room to prepare another task, while he occupied himself with Caritas.

He opened the atlas at the map of Africa. "Well, Miss Carry," he said, encouragingly, "what have you to tell me about the Ashantees, of whom I spoke to you in our last lesson?"

Carry came nearer. "Oh, dear Mr. Mannsfeld," she said, "I was about to ask you to let me take up Asia again to-day—a part of Asia, I mean."

"Why do you wish that? We have gone through Asia pretty thoroughly. What part is it that you would like to know more about?"

"Russia in Asia," replied the young girl, timidly. "About Siberia."

"Why more about that desolate land? I have told you nearly all there is to be said with regard to it."

"I should like to know more about it."

There was a pause. At length the tutor asked: "What has awakened your interest in Siberia, Carry?"

"I love Siberia," she answered, adding, as he

looked at her keenly, while she burst into tears, "my father is buried there."

She covered her eyes with her hand. A long pause ensued. Finally, Mannsfeld said: "You told me your father had been killed in the war against Sweden."

"So I thought, so I had been told. He had gone to Russia to serve in the Russian army against Sweden. But, instead of that, he was sent by the despotic government to Siberia, and died there of grief."

She hid her face in her hands, sobbing. Mannsfeld sat opposite her in silence. At length he asked:

"How do you know that he died there?"

"Because my darling mother saw his grave, herself; because she could not rest, after all inquiries about him had proved useless, until, young and delicate as she was, she had gone to Russia, all alone, with no companion but good old Kerkow, a faithful family servant, whom I have known, too. Such a good man as he was! How often he has carried me in his arms, and how he loved me, and did every thing he could to please me!"

"And your mother?" asked Mannsfeld, in a hardly-audible voice.

"My mother was in a dreadful situation in that strange, wild world. She was only a few years older than I, and I am sure far more inexperienced, for you see, dear Mr. Mannsfeld," she added, sagely, "I have always lived in great cities, but my mother grew up in the country, and at my grandfather Promnitz's they did nothing but pray all day long."

"Your mother's prayers had been effectual, Car-



ry," replied Mannsfeld, severely. "You say she went to St. Petersburg herself?"

"She did so, my darling mother, when I was six months old, and she could leave me in my good grandmother's care. She went down on her knees before the empress, the same one who is now ruling so terribly, and leaves every thing to her favorites. But toward my mother she was very kind. It was only then that poor mamma found out what had become of my father. He, with the other officers attached to Duke Anton, had been cruelly arrested, and one sent here, another there, 'into misery,' as it is very appropriately called. My father was sent to a desolate place called Berezov."

She looked for the place on the map of Siberia, but in vain. The old map merely showed the vast, empty land intersected by a few lines, which partly represented rivers, and aside from these the boundless void was interrupted only by the names of a number of barbarous tribes.

"The empress," Caritas at length continued, after both had long sat wrapped in deep, mournful silence, "gave my mother a pardon for my unfortunate father. It is outrageous! Pardon! As if he had ever committed a crime against her! But my mother gratefully accepted the pity of this powerful sovereign. Only think, Mr. Mannsfeld, she called my mother *thou*, a lady who was already a mother herself! But, I hear, the Russian czars all call their subjects *thou*. The empress seemed really to pity my mother deeply in her way, and would not at first consent to her delivering the pardon herself. But mamma insisted

upon it, and went to Siberia, in the midst of winter, through snow and storms, with old Kerkow. The journey lasted two or three weeks, and, when she finally reached Berezov, her beloved husband was no longer there—he had died three weeks before!”

Her sobs interrupted her. She wept long, her arms resting on her knees, her face hidden in her hands. When she at last looked up, Mannsfeld had left the room.

In a short time he returned, calm and collected as ever, but, as it seemed to her, with a milder expression in his face than she had ever observed in him before. He passed his hand gently over her hair, and said, in a tone of sympathy:

“Poor child!”

“Oh!” she cried, “if you only knew how much good your sympathy does me! Pray do not think me indiscreet, but I felt as if I must pour out my heart to some one. It seemed ready to burst, and I could not trouble my poor mother with my sorrow when she has so much of her own. Oh, dear Mr. Mannsfeld, you have no idea how dearly I love my mother!”

“Your mother is a saint, Carry. But you see that she bears with calmness and resignation the burden that God has laid upon her.”

“That is true,” replied Carry, “because she is so pious. But I believe she feels the more deeply, the more quiet she is. And just let me tell you what further experiences she had. Out there in the wilderness, old Kerkow fell sick, and she had to stay there all winter, until in the spring she could return—by way of Moscow, this time, for she did not wish to

see St. Petersburg again—to her parents and her child. And there she lived for years, only for me and for her deep grief.”

“Time,” said Mannsfeld, “exercised its healing power on her. And that is as it should be. How could we bear the weight of life, if we were unable to forget the past? To your mother, too, time brought consolation. Her grief for the husband whom she had known but a few months, improved her, and made her more beautiful than she had probably ever been. She found a new happiness, a new husband, and gave you a new, kind father, Carry. And, once more, she did right.”

Caritas was silent a while. Then she said: “Ah, dear Mr. Mannsfeld, I don’t think you judge her quite correctly there. I hardly think my mother ever would have married again if she could have devoted herself to me, and nourished her grief undisturbedly in her father’s house, but her mother was a horrible woman, and treated her shockingly.”

“What do you mean, Caritas? You have been misinformed. Her mother—”

“Yes, her own mother, *she* was an angel of goodness. I was hardly three years old when she died, but I can still see her in my mind, as she used to welcome me from her sick-bed, with such a heavenly smile, when mamma took me to her in the morning, and made me kiss her hand, and say, ‘*Bon jour, ma chère grand-maman.*’ Mamma has told me since what a martyrdom she had to go through before she died, and how she was mourned for by the whole province, and particularly by the poor. But my good

old grandfather was a very weak man. He was caught by a horrible old coquette, and married her when my grandmother had been dead only a very short time. Oh! you can have no idea how my mother used to be treated by her wicked step-mother. They restricted her in every way, and cheated her out of her money. Of course, poor mamma did not tell me any thing about it, but I could see very well that she always made her cry, and then, too, I knew it from what my nurse said; she was always in mortal dread when she met the old countess, and often, when she was talking with the other servants, I would hear them pitying their young lady, and wishing their former mistress back again. And just then, you see, my step-father came into the neighborhood and visited us, and offered himself to my mother. She wouldn't have him at first. My nurse told me so later. I think she had been listening, and felt quite sorry that my mother refused him, for she thought it would be the best thing for her dear mistress to get away from there. But one day, when my wicked grandmother had abused her terribly, and even wanted to drive her from her quiet quarters in the pavilion—I remember the scene as distinctly as if it had happened yesterday—my step-father renewed his proposal, and my mother accepted him. I still think she did it chiefly to give me a father."

Caritas paused a while after this long speech, lost in thought, and without looking at Mannsfeld. Then she continued:

"And he has been a kind, careful father to me, whom I will gladly obey in all things. He has been a

loving husband to my mother, too. And I am sure she loves him dearly—only, it seems to me,” thoughtfully added the young girl, who, only four weeks ago, had celebrated her sixteenth birthday, “such a love as she felt for my own father, a love which absorbs the whole heart, and makes us happier and better, and brings us nearer to God, such a love she has never felt for my step-father.”

An unconscious feeling of shame came over the young creature. During her whole discourse she had hardly looked at Mannsfeld, and during the last few words her eyes were downcast. Now she looked up at him somewhat timidly.

“What ails you, my dear tutor?” she exclaimed, in alarm. “You are as pale as a corpse! You are ill. Shall I get you some water?”

She started to leave the room, but he detained her. “It is nothing, dear child,” he said. “A sudden dizziness came over me; it is almost past. You know I am a miserable ruin. Tell your brothers that a slight indisposition forces me to omit their other lessons. I hope the air will do me good.”

He walked with huge strides out into the garden, and into the woods. An hour later a peasant whom he had met brought a message to the servant who waited at table, to the effect that he should present his excuses to the countess, if he did not return to dinner. Caritas was quiet and thoughtful. Her mother had not enjoined silence upon her, but she did not know whether she would approve of her having confided the family secrets to a stranger. She did not therefore allude to the matter, as her mother asked

her no questions. Mother and daughter were silent and oppressed. Neither of them mentioned Mannsfeld again, after Carry had simply remarked that he had not been well in the morning.

Agatha had been hardly less excited than her daughter, by her conversation with the latter the day before. The veil, which a period of fifteen years had cast over Moritz's image in her soul, had once more been lifted more completely than she had allowed herself to do since her second marriage. She was sad and preoccupied all day. Anxieties of every kind flooded in upon her, and perplexed her. Moritz's beloved form, her husband's letters, which expressed great anxiety, Mannsfeld's mysterious behavior all these surged to and fro in her brain, as well as in her heart.

Toward evening she went into the garden to breathe the fresh air, for, amid all her cares and sorrows, spring had slowly opened. She saw Mannsfeld, returned from his ramble, entering the back gate of the garden.

"Do you feel any better?" she asked, and her mild, gentle voice seemed to fall like a healing balm on the lacerated heart of the unhappy man; for he responded by a look of gratitude, of veneration, such as she had never seen from him. His answer was so low that she could not understand it. It was only by the motion of his lips that she could perceive that he answered at all. But he passed her so quickly that she could not repeat her question.

Nevertheless, a certain feeling of melancholy satisfaction came over her. As the daylight faded, she went up to her quiet room. From a dressing-room ad-

joining it a narrow flight of stairs led from a small tapestry door directly into the garden, which had been specially constructed for her private use. She was wont to avail herself of these stairs for her early morning walks, to lock the door on passing out of it, and draw the key, and to leave the latter in the lock only on the inside.

She sat for a long while, lost in the twilight of distant memories. By degrees she became so calm and resigned, that she finally went to the piano, and, by a movement which she could not resist, struck a few chords. Agatha had not had much musical culture. She had hardly ever sung any thing but a hymn. But she had a fine ear for music, and a sweet, melodious voice. She sung :

“The day expires ;  
My soul desires  
And longs to see the day,  
When whate’er has vexed her here  
Shall be done away.”

Suddenly a full, deep, powerful voice sent up the response from the garden.

“The night is here ;  
Oh be thou near !  
Christ, make it light within ;  
Drive away from out my heart  
All the night of sin !”

The countess started up in alarm, but, driven on by an involuntary impulse, hardly knowing what she did, she sung on :

“The sun’s last ray  
Has passed away;  
O uncreated sun!  
Let thy light now shine on me,  
Then my joy were won.”

She listened. And again, slowly and solemnly, the voice responded:

“The stars on high  
In azure sky  
Their Maker’s glory gleam;  
Blest he who in yonder world  
Like the stars shall beam!” \*

She was terrified. Was this magic? This hymn, this same hymn, she had sung with Moritz. “It is his spirit,” she whispered, trembling in every limb. She hastened to the window. The garden was buried in deep obscurity. Stars were gleaming in the dark-blue sky, but they threw no light upon the earth. She collected herself with difficulty. “I must be half-insane,” she said, putting her hand to her head. “It is Mannsfeld, who happens to know that hymn, as thousands of Germans know it. Moritz’s voice was full of tenderness, a sweet yet powerful tenor; this is a deep, full voice, melancholy, thrilling, mysterious, like every thing else in poor Mannsfeld. Strange that I have never heard him sing before! But it is only the happy who sing to themselves. I will ask him to-morrow if it was he who sung. And who else should it be? Perhaps we might have some musical practice together.”

When, however, the countess met the tutor again the next day at dinner, she had not the courage to ask

\* Altered from the *Lyra Germanica*.



him the intended question. She could not herself tell why. "It might embarrass him," she thought, "as he is so over-respectful and over-reserved. He might feel as if he had taken too great a liberty. I will wait till some occasion offers."

No occasion presented itself; yet the intercourse between the two had evidently become easier and more agreeable of late, since Mannsfeld had dropped some of his repellent reserve, and his whole manner bore a milder stamp. This was in great part the result of a short visit from the count, which seemed to draw parents, children, and tutor, nearer to each other. The count had for the moment formed some faint hopes of a better state of things, without, however, mentioning the ground on which they were based. The few days which he spent in the bosom of his family afforded him much relaxation. The weather was fine, and remained so during his stay. Long walks to the sea-shore or into the woods were undertaken, in which Agatha took part. The boys shouted, skipped, climbed about, and picked flowers and branches in honor of their darling mother's presence. The impetuous caresses of the sturdy little fellows, the mild influence of the soft air, made the beautiful, loving mother appear doubly beautiful, animated by tenfold love.

There is a magic power in the mild, insinuating air of the brief northern spring; a peculiar charm, too, which can be only felt, not described, in the stern, strongly-marked scenery of the North; it speaks to the soul, as that of the South speaks to the senses, powerfully, irresistibly.

Mannsfeld was gentle and kind; only a certain

suppressed emotion might have given any one who had observed him cause to fear that a momentary calm was preceding the outbreak of a fearful storm within him. Agatha saw only his more cheerful mood, and rejoiced in it, without asking herself why this was the case.

But a new cause for anxiety was soon to cloud also these cheerful hours. Caritas's strangely-excited manner began to trouble her mother's mind. It was not toward the latter alone that she from time to time manifested her feelings by impetuous caresses. Her attachment to her tutor had acquired by degrees something overstrained and strangely passionate, that impressed Agatha very unpleasantly. She would grow restless, whenever he was absent some time; if he stayed away longer than usual, she would not express her regret in words, but would grow absent-minded, would start almost imperceptibly at the slightest noise, would blush when he made his appearance. The slightest attention which he paid her she received with a certain enthusiasm, without, in her girlish innocence, making an attempt to conceal her gratitude. A leaf which he had picked, for the purpose of showing her its wonderful structure, she put away carefully in a little pocket-book; the place which he chose for resting during their walks was always the prettiest to her, and she was ingenious in pointing out its charms, its advantages, if her mother or the boys preferred another. Her whole manner showed, with childish frankness, and yet veiled by a certain maidenly reserve, that a magnetic power drew her toward her tutor.

"What does this mean?" Agatha asked herself,

greatly disturbed. "Can a feeling of love have already sprung up in this child's heart? and for a man of his age, and so unattractive? And he—no, he can have no suspicion of it! and yet—then he must go away, must leave her!—Good God! would I drive the unfortunate man out into the cruel, desolate world again, when he has at last found a haven of rest here after his fearfully stormy life?" She could have hated herself for the thought.

"She is but a child," she thought. "I will speak to her. And yet—would I not make matters worse by enlightening her as to her feelings? She is evidently not conscious of them yet. She would not show them so openly. But he! Does he not recognize them? What man could deceive himself in such a matter?"

Her cheeks glowed at the thought—"No!" she said, "he is not *dishonorable*. Perhaps the unhappy man cannot resist the sweet feeling of being *loved*, of being loved by *one* human being in the world. Perhaps he loves her himself—" A convulsive pain went through her heart—"I *must* separate them."

She tried to consider, without being well able to collect her thoughts, whether there was no one among her friends, no family of their acquaintance, to whom she could confide Carry, under some pretext, for a season. But she could think of no one.

"It may not be so bad, after all," she thought again. "Carry is a child, and he is a man nearer fifty than forty; it would be a psychological problem, if two hearts which Nature has put so far asunder, should come together. However—he is certainly not

handsome; but who cares for beauty in a man?—and he has a noble, powerful form, and his mind makes him more interesting than if he were an Adonis; and Carry—she has grown much prettier than she ever was before! When her cheeks are flushed and her eyes sparkle so—and oh! she has all the fresh charm of early youth. Ah, no wonder that she is beautiful in his eyes when love for him shines out from hers!”

The thought was unspeakably painful to her. “For,” she said, “what is to come of it?” It was only by a convulsive exertion that she could conquer the disquietude within her.

My readers would mistake, if they thought that Agatha had experienced all these thoughts and fears at once, as they are recorded here. On the contrary, they occupied her mind more or less for a period of eight or ten days, during the time of the above-mentioned walks, and it was generally only at night, when she was alone again, and reflected upon the day just past, that she arrived at a full consciousness of these feelings.

One afternoon a thunder-shower was rising, and hence it had been resolved during dinner to give up the walk for that day. Some hours later, as the rain had not yet come down, and the close air of her room oppressed her, Agatha left the house for a quiet walk in the garden. She met Mannsfeld. He looked pale and agitated.

“Where are the children?” she inquired.

“They are playing in the meadow,” he replied.

“And Caritas?”

He was silent. Then he said: “I cannot tell madame the countess where Miss Caritas is.”

He passed on with a respectful bow.

Agatha did not notice any thing ambiguous in his answer. She was only pained by the death-like pallor of his face. She went on to the end of the avenue, to a large arbor, which frequently afforded the family a pleasant shelter when the sun was shining. On this close, cloudy afternoon its gloomy atmosphere was but little attractive. The countess was passing it, when she thought she heard a slight movement within. She stopped and looked in. Caritas was leaning over the table, her face buried in her hands, sobbing convulsively.

The countess entered the arbor. "Caritas!" she cried, "my child, what ails you?"

The girl started up; mother and daughter trembled in every limb. From this arbor Agatha, at a distance, had seen Mannsfeld emerge.

"What is the matter?" the mother asked again. Carry flung herself upon her neck, weeping violently.

"I don't know what ails me! Don't ask me, mamma! oh, I am unspeakably unhappy!"

But she did not find the interest in the sympathy for her *unknown* grief which she had hoped for.

Agatha saw an open book lying upon the table. "What is that?" she asked, sternly. "A novel?"

She hastily took up the book, but threw it down again quite as hastily. It was a Latin school-book, an innocent Cornelius Nepos.

"What is it?" she continued, in a somewhat gentle voice. "I must know it, my child."

"Oh, nothing of importance," replied Caritas, who had grown more composed meanwhile. "Mr. Manns-

feld has been telling me a sad story, that touched me deeply. That is all."

"It is very wrong in Mr. Mannsfeld to excite your fancy with romantic stories," remarked her mother, not without bitterness. "I shall speak to him about it."

"Oh, mamma," cried Caritas, with some vehemence, "pray do not do so. It was the story of his own life. The history of a very unhappy man."

She burst into tears anew. "Oh, dearest mamma," she repeated, "do not speak to him about it! It would pain him deeply."

Agatha's eyes, too, overflowed with tears. The girl laid her head upon her mother's bosom, and, while she wept out her sorrow there, burning tears dropped upon her hair. "Try to control yourself, my child," Agatha said at length: "endeavor to turn your thoughts toward God, who lays on no one a heavier burden than he can bear, and has given strength also to this strong, noble man to bear his fate, whatever it may be."

She left the girl, who was now weeping quietly, and walked slowly back to the house. "What shall I think of this?" she said to herself. "To this child he gives his confidence, while he rejects my sympathy, my friendship. What can he have against me? He, so proud, so enthusiastic for liberty and equality, is not the man to be awed by difference in station. And what can he have against me personally?"

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE DISCLOSURE.

As Agatha entered the house, a servant handed her a letter.

"From monsieur the count," he said; "a messenger has just brought it, and I was going to look for your ladyship in the garden."

Agatha took the letter with her into her quiet room, before she opened it. It was a sad letter. The secret conflicts between the two parties, both of whom shunned no means of undermining each other, continued. But the scale had turned still more in favor of the *Hats*, when, as before related, several influential men among the *Caps*, who were in the pay of Russia, had united with the *Hats*, bought by France, in drawing the Swedish government into the powerful league formed against the great Frederick. The king, who had no will of his own, though he was one of the best-intentioned, most moral men of his kingdom, had become a mere instrument in the treacherous hands of the *Hats*. The count felt that he could do no more for him, even as a friend and counsellor. The *Caps* were in a state of fermentation. They had convinced themselves that a change of the constitution was ab-

solutely necessary—a change which would restore the royal dignity to some degree, and wrest a dangerous power from the hands of not so much the senate itself, as a committee of nobles taken from it, who tyrannized the whole nation with Oriental arbitrariness.

Count Kronhelm, with his usual caution, did not consider the moment an appropriate one for a revolution of the kind. His most intimate friend, Count Eric Brahe, colonel of the royal guards, was one of the chief agents in the movement. But Count Kronhelm held back cautiously, and nothing could induce him to give his name to the enterprise, or to allow a word in writing to be extorted from him. His letter to his wife therefore expressed no fears for his person; merely anxiety and depression on account of the situation of the king and the state of affairs in general.

Agatha read the long letter through in the same spirit; held it, lost in anxious thought, in her hand a while, and was just about to lock it up in her writing-desk, when the thought struck her: “Was there not something written on the margin? Have I not overlooked a postscript?”

She opened the letter and read:

“In addition to all my other troubles and vexations, I have received the unpleasant intelligence that Mannsfeld wishes to leave. He assigns no reason, further than that ‘imperative circumstances’ make it necessary for him to return to England. What can be the matter with the strange man? He has probably told you his motives. Speak to him. Try to induce him to stay. He is very inaccessible, however. Did I not tell you so? A true Rousseau!”



Agatha stood motionless. "Going away? And without thinking it worth while to inform me—in whose house he lives, whose children he is instructing—of his intentions? Has he so little esteem for me?"

An unspeakable bitterness took possession of her. "And I am to speak to him? question him? I will do so. I will ask him to-morrow, coldly, briefly, as alone he can expect me to do, if he thinks me worthy of so little esteem. Caritas probably knows all about it. That was what made the child so unhappy! and why should it be kept a secret from me? I must speak to him! I will do so this very evening."

Toward evening the thunder-storm at length broke out. Torrents of rain fell from the sky and refreshed the air and the soil. Carry came to supper with the boys, and said: "Mamma, Mr. Mannsfeld has necessary letters to write; I am to send him up some supper. Would you let me read you a canto of 'The Messiah' to-night? I can't do it as well as he, but you know you want me to practise."

Agatha gladly accepted the proposal. It was a relief to her that she was not obliged to speak to him to-night. She told the children that papa had written to her, and sent his love to them all. Then she summoned all her courage, and told them that Mr. Mannsfeld was going to leave them.

She addressed herself to the boys, while Carry sat silent, with downcast eyes. Axel began to cry, while Eric broke out into expressions of vexation. Both were ready to run to his room, and, with the bold, self-confidence of vigorous childhood, entreat him to stay. Kept back with some difficulty by their mother, they

consoled themselves with the hope that he would not go *immediately*, and soon were thinking of other things.

To Carry, Agatha said not a word of the matter. The evening was a dreary one. The young reader made a thousand errors in rhythm and expression, without eliciting a single reproof from her absent-minded listener.

Early the next morning the countess, who had grown more composed overnight, went to the school-room, where, as she knew, Mannsfeld was already awaiting the boys. It seemed to her as if a tremor went through his strong frame as she entered.

She approached him with a constrained manner.

"I received a letter from my husband yesterday," she said, quietly, though her gentle voice trembled slightly, "from which I learn with surprise that you wish to leave us. May I ask your reasons for this, Mr. Mannsfeld?"

He was silent, while the eyes of both were turned upon the ground.

"Various circumstances make it necessary for me to leave Sweden," he said, at length.

"And why did you not consider it worth your while to communicate this to me, the mistress of the house, and the mother of your pupils, when you informed my husband of it?" asked Agatha, the bitterness which his curt answer had again roused within her betraying itself in her voice as well as in her words.

He remained silent still longer than before. She could see that he breathed heavily and controlled

himself with difficulty. A feeling of deep, unutterable pity took possession of her heart.

"I communicated my intentions to monsieur the count, as he alone had the means at hand, in town, to secure another tutor for his children. I had not the courage to speak of it *here*—for I find the parting very hard."

"But Carry knew about it," said Agatha, in an unconscious tone of reproach.

"It seemed necessary to prepare Carry, with her warm heart, her passionate feelings, for a separation which would otherwise have been much harder for her to bear."

"And do you not believe that I too—that I am not also your friend? That I—do not also feel—a friendly interest in you, and shall miss—the tutor of my children?"

He looked at her with deep expression. The look was totally incomprehensible to her, but her cheeks glowed beneath it, and with the dim consciousness within her.

Just then the boys, who had been playing in the garden longer than they had intended, rushed into the room. Axel was delighted at unexpectedly finding his mother there, and immediately overwhelmed her with boyishly-rough caresses; while Eric, with tears in his eyes, began to reproach his dear tutor for wishing to leave them. Axel soon joined him, and Agatha noiselessly left the room.

After dinner the boys were importunate in their entreaties for another walk through the garden into the woods, since the trees were looking so fresh and

lovely after the rain, and the flowers blooming more beautifully than ever; their mother, who had been in her room all the morning, must come out and enjoy it all with them. During dinner the fact had come to light that Mannsfeld would not leave till the end of the week. An English vessel was lying at Gothenburg, of which he intended to avail himself. Thus the boys were already half-consolated, for happy childhood lives in the present moment. Agatha promised to accompany them. Carry was unlike herself. She was silent, grave, and very, very sad.

Somewhat later, another thunder-storm came up, and made the walk impossible. The delicious, refreshing air of the long, light summer evening, drew the whole family into the garden again, which was wondrously beautiful. The foliage, refreshed by the rain, shone with magic brilliancy in the light of the setting sun. On the young, just-expanding roses, a few drops still glistened, like tears on youthful cheeks. The party went admiringly from tree to tree, from flower to flower.

The children would have picked a nosegay for their mother, but she restrained them. "Let the flowers enjoy their short, freshened life in their native air, children," she said, smiling. Just then, her eye fell upon a tall, more distant rose-tree, beside which Mannsfeld was standing, with lacerated, almost bursting heart, lost in the contemplation of her marvellous beauty, as she looked down upon the merry boys hovering around her, with a charming expression of maternal love. At the very top of the rose-tree hung a little rose, only just opened, and glistening with

moisture, which a gust of wind had half broken from its stem.

"See," said Agatha, approaching. "This poor little thing has already received its death-blow. But you cannot reach it."

Mannsfeld's eye had followed hers. He raised his arm, plucked the rose, and a movement of his hand seemed to indicate that he was about to give it to her. At that moment, Caritas, who had stopped by another flower-bed, came running up. "Oh," she cried, with childish delight, "what a lovely rose!" Mannsfeld turned quickly. He advanced a few steps to meet her, and, with a melancholy smile, gave the rose to the young girl.

But Caritas cried: "Oh no, mamma must have the first rose." She stepped up to her mother, and was about to attach the rose to the straw hat which she carried in her hand. But Agatha cried, indignantly: "What are you doing, Caritas?—Roses are fit for youth alone. They are no longer suited to *my* age!" So saying, she snatched the hat from her daughter's hand, and the rose from the hat, in such unnatural haste that the latter fell to the ground, its leaves scattered by such impetuous treatment.

Caritas looked up in alarm. Her mother's face was burning like fire. An angry look fell upon her, such as she had never before seen those loving eyes send forth.

"What is the matter, dear mamma?" she cried, anxiously, "are you ill? What have I done? Are you in pain?"

Agatha stood glowing with shame, trembling in

every limb. Slowly she raised her eyes, slowly, timidly, to Mannsfeld.

Almighty God! what was this look that she met. Love, rapture, *triumph*, shone from the gaze of this mysterious man, which rested upon her with magic power. A feeling of terror seized her.

"Let me be, dear child," she said, while the glow in her cheeks gave way to a deadly pallor—"I am indeed not well. I see that the evening air does not agree with me. I will go in; I shall feel better in the house."

Caritas would have gone with her; but, with an urgent, beseeching voice, she entreated: "Child, I beg of you, I conjure you, leave me alone, leave me in peace!"

And, warding off almost forcibly the boys who had hastened to her, she went toward the house with rapid steps, holding herself up with convulsive exertion, passed through the back door up the private stairs, through the dressing-room, to her parlor. Here she hastily locked the door, and bolted it, hardly knowing what she did, as if she wished to hide herself from all the world, now that she could no longer do so from herself; for she had cast the first terrified glance into herself, into the innermost depths of her own heart.

She sank down by the sofa upon her shaking knees, now hiding her face, glowing with deep shame, in her hands, then again she lifted them trembling to heaven, wringing them and entreating mercy.

"Good God!" she whispered, "what a look was that! and how fearfully low have I fallen, that such a

gaze should fill me with rapture! I, wife and mother, and—oh shame! jealous of my own daughter!—and he knows it, he saw it all; there was a blissful *triumph* in that look! Oh that I could *hate* him!—Unhappy man, why should I hate him? Has he not controlled himself until the last moment? has he not struggled—struggled until I, miserable I myself, drew nearer and nearer to him? And is he not going away?”

She sprang up aghast. “Going!” she cried, “I cannot bear it—what am I saying, wretch that I am! Yes, he *must* go! Oh, my mother, thou sainted one, forgive me for the mere thought of what would be so unworthy of thee, of myself! The thought—yes, but the feeling—who can resist that?”

“Yes, he must go! Go from the haven of rest, of friendship, of love, out into the raging sea of life. Unhappy man! And can his going raise me up again, who have sunk to such a depth? Can I ever look my honored husband, my children, in the face again—I, who despise myself?—And Caritas? Oh! her shrewd eyes have looked me through. And her own heart! Oh, shame! Mother and daughter bound by this spell!”

Thus the unhappy woman, rent by grief and inward reproaches, spent more than an hour of anguish, until at length Ingeborg came in from the next room, where she had been sewing, and urged the gracious countess to go to bed, hoping that sleep might gradually steal over her and quiet her at last. A moan or sob had occasionally reached her ear. She supposed that her mistress’s agitation was caused by sad news

from Stockholm, and had the delicacy not to intrude upon her sorrow. But she was beginning to feel anxious at its long continuance.

"You are right, my good Ingeborg," said the countess. "I will go to bed. But let me have perfect quiet. Let none of the children come in, not even Caritas. I will try to sleep."

After a night of bitter agony, the countess, quite contrary to her general custom, would not rise at her usual hour, although she earnestly assured Ingeborg, who wished to send a messenger to town after the doctor, that she was not ill. "I need nothing but quiet," she said, decidedly.

As the day advanced, Caritas, in spite of Ingeborg's attempts to restrain her, crept into the room on tiptoe. Agatha heard her say, "*I must* see mamma." But she turned her face to the wall, closed her eyes, and, with violently-beating heart, lay perfectly still, as if she were asleep.

With a sigh the poor child at length crept away again; while her mother, painfully moved by the bitterest self-reproaches, and almost despising herself, burst into scalding tears.

An hour later she heard Axel crying outside her door, and at the same time the voice of Ingeborg, who was endeavoring to restrain and console him. She could bear it no longer. "Was I possessed by an evil spirit when I would not see my darling child?" she asked herself. "Come in, my Axel," she cried; "let him come in, my good Ingeborg."

Axel rushed into the room and into her arms. But this time it was not anxiety for his sick mother



which drove him to her, but the longing to find consolation with her for a sorrow of his own.

"Oh, mamma," the boy cried, "Mr. Mannsfeld is going away to-day, after all. And I am so sorry!"

"You are mistaken, my child; his ship is not to sail for six days; what should he do in Gothenburg during all that time?"

"Yes, but he found out, last night, that there is a skipper from Dantzic lying in the little bay of Nyköping, and he is going with him to-day. And Eric says it is a little bit of a ship. Nothing but a fishing-boat. So poor dear Mr. Mannsfeld may be drowned in the sea if there should be another thunder-storm, you know, mamma, like the fisherman, Peter Svenson, who left so many children. You remember, don't you, how Eric and I went there in the carriage, with Ingeborg, and took some clothes to the poor woman, and the money that you sent her? Oh, mamma, they cried so bitterly, and that was just such a little boat!"

While the child rattled on, Agatha, who had been quite stunned by his first words, had become somewhat composed.

"Be easy, my child. At this season there is no danger for the smallest boat when managed by experienced seamen. Go now, darling, I want to rise and dress myself—I must see him before he goes. He would not wish to leave the house without bidding me farewell."

She could hardly stand upon her trembling feet while she dressed herself hastily, with Ingeborg's assistance.

When the latter had repeatedly expressed her con-

cern at her mistress's indisposition, and her hope of soon seeing her better, she said :

"There is a letter for your ladyship, on the table in the other room, that was brought from town yesterday. It is a queer-looking letter, with all sorts of directions and post-marks on it. And the addresses are all in foreign languages, and struck out, and written again. The letter must have made a long journey, it looks so dirty ; not a bit as if it was meant for such a noble lady."

Agatha hardly listened. Her thoughts were with the traveller. "Where will he go?" she thought. "To Dantzic? What is it that drives him away?" A sad, sweet feeling told her that it was from her that he desired to flee.

But when she entered her sitting-room, her attention was immediately attracted by the large letter lying on the table, written all over, and covered with post-marks. The original address, which had been crossed out, ran thus :

"To the worshipful body of magistrates in the city of Glogau, in Silesia; this letter to be dutifully delivered to the right honorable, her ladyship, the gracious Baroness von Hohenhorst, born Countess of Promnitz."

The letter had evidently come from Russia, or the eastern part of Poland, and, as her step-mother no longer resided in Wildeneck, had been forwarded to France by the authorities. The intelligence of her change of residence had evidently not reached her former home. From Paris the letter had been returned, and then sent to different parts of Germany,

until it had at length fallen into the hands of her man of business in Thuringia, who had charge of the property which she had inherited from her mother. Those of my readers who are familiar with the imperfect postal communication that existed a hundred years ago, even in the more civilized countries of Europe, will not be surprised to learn that it had taken the letter nearly three years to accomplish this circuitous journey.

She opened the envelope, and held in her hand some coarse, gray sheets of paper, covered with stiff German writing, old-fashioned, as it had first been formed in the beginning of the last century. Her eye sought the signature. Her heart misgave her. She read:

“Your ladyship’s most obedient servant,

“Dr. Christian Brenner.”

She turned to the beginning of the letter. With supernatural courage the wretched woman read on—read the terrible letter through to the end. Thus it ran:

“NOBLE AND MOST GRACIOUS LADY:

“Your ladyship’s most humble servant, the subscriber, in being so bold as to address you, does so with that natural repugnance which any human being feels who is obliged to give another innocent person pain, and to recall to memory lamentable and miserable recollections. Yet he cannot refrain from the consoling hope that an all-kind Providence, to whose decrees your ladyship showed herself so submissive in the presence of the subscriber, years ago, may al-

ready have turned all the evil, which sinful men committed, into good, and happily reunited your ladyship to her highly-revered husband. I thus commence :

“ After Ivan Petrovitch Gromoff, who, eleven years ago, was known to your ladyship as Governor of Berezov, had been ill, for five long months, of a painful, incurable disease, the description of which your most humble servant will spare your ladyship, he sent for me three days ago, and confessed to me that his conscience would not suffer him to die, in consequence of several misdeeds which he had committed, the possible reparation of one of which he desired to place in my hands. For your ladyship must know that Ivan Petrovitch had at bottom a kind and tender heart, but had often been turned from the ways of God by the fear of man, and his love for strong drink. He then disclosed to me that when his darling son, Alexander Ivanovitch, was lying on his death-bed, he had urgently entreated him, nay, even exacted his solemn promise on the cross of the Redeemer, to liberate his beloved tutor, i. e., to hold out to him an opportunity of escaping, as soon as he (i. e., the father) could do so without danger to himself; and that he had gladly made this vow, for he had felt deeply grateful for the love and devotion with which Baron von Hohenhorst had nursed the boy through his last illness. Now, it had so happened that there was in Berezov a Greek of high degree, who, about eight or nine years before, at the time of the Empress Anna, had been sent into banishment by the tyrant Biron, whom he had in some way offended, with the instruction that, at the end of ten years of banishment, he should be taken to the Turk-

ish border, and sent across the frontier, with the strict imperial order never to show himself in the Russian empire again, under penalty of death. This unfortunate man, who had the same tall figure which adorned your ladyship's noble husband, was just then, when his time was nearly out, lying sick unto death; ay, God Almighty had so ordered it that when, at the intercession of his relatives, the new empress had shortened the term of his banishment, and the order had arrived from St. Petersburg to liberate the Greek prince, the poor man had died on the very same day. Upon this it seemed to Petrovitch as if God Himself put it into his heart that this was a merciful sign for him to fulfil his vow, and liberate the exile Hohenhorst, as he could make the exchange without injuring himself. He had caused the dead man to be dressed in the clothes of your ladyship's husband, in which matter it had been a fortunate circumstance that the only man who had taken care of the sick prince had had his tongue cut out on having been 'sent into misery' years ago, and thus was unable to speak or ever to reveal the deception. Your ladyship is aware that her obedient servant was away at the time. The deception could not otherwise have been practised without my knowledge. He went on to tell me that this man had helped him place the body in a coffin, and had been his only instrument in the matter, and the dead man had been buried and entered on the books as Moritz von Hohenhorst. Meanwhile he had delivered over to your ladyship's husband such property and effects as the Greek prince had left, had given him a passport in the name of Ghika, and sent him,

without delay, to the Caspian Sea, where he had gone on board a Turkish vessel. But the whole dangerous enterprise had been nearly frustrated by the obstinacy—as he disrespectfully expressed it—of your ladyship's husband, who had refused decidedly to take an oath that he would neither return to Germany nor inform his family of his liberation; upon which, he, Ivan Petrovitch, had been forced to insist, as his position as commandant, and indeed his life, had depended upon it. For he would doubtless have been called to the strictest account, if it had become known in St. Petersburg that he had aided the flight of the exile. But your ladyship's husband declared that he would far rather die here than live in foreign lands without his wife. At length it had been agreed upon that he should not reveal the secret, or inform your ladyship or any one else in Germany of his whereabouts, until three years had passed, and this Baron von Hohenhorst had sworn to him on the cross and by the blood of Christ. But when, only three weeks later, your ladyship came to Berezov herself, bringing, too, an imperial pardon for her husband, he had felt very wretched, and had preferred to see as little as possible of your ladyship, because he feared your ladyship's grief might move him so deeply that he would confess every thing to you, and bring on his own ruin by doing so. But since then his conscience had given him no rest, particularly because he feared that your ladyship might marry again, and thus unconsciously commit a heavy sin, and then perhaps fall into great distress in three years, unless your first honored husband should during that time die in battle in the Turkish army, which he

had intended to enter. He had, however, been forced to leave every thing to God; but now, when his end was approaching, and the disclosure could no longer harm him, it was his wish that I should reveal the whole matter to your ladyship, for the reason that your honored husband had not perhaps returned to you long ago, which I pray most fervently God may have permitted to be the case.

“Soon after the poor, cowardly man had made this confession to me, he departed this life, for no Esculapian skill could possibly save him. Your most humble servant hopes to God that your ladyship will forgive him in Christian charity. It is, indeed, but natural to us all to consider our own advantage before all else. I, at least, deeply as I pity your ladyship, ought not to say a word against him, as he has remembered me bounteously in his will, and, having no children or other natural heirs, has rewarded my medical services so liberally that I can now hope to rest from my labors in my old age.

“Written at Berezov, this 3d of May, A. D. 1753. I remain, until death, in reverence and pity, your ladyship’s most obedient servant,

“DR. CHRISTIAN BRENNER.”

The paper fell from Agatha’s hand upon the table, when, upheld by a supernatural force, she had reached the end of the letter. She sat speechless, rigid, ghastly pale, without stirring.

Suddenly there was a low knock at the door. A moment after, it opened slowly, and Mannsfeld entered the room, wrapped in a travelling-cloak, a travelling-cap in his hand.

He stood still a moment; then, hesitatingly, advanced a few steps. "I have come, madame," he said, raising his voice with a painful effort, "to pay my respects to you before leaving."

Agatha stared at him with wide-open eyes. She answered not a word. He came nearer. He stood before her.

"Moritz!" she whispered. He started. He knelt before her. "You know me, my Agatha?" he asked, in a low voice.

She lifted her trembling hand and pointed to the letter. His eye fell upon the name of Brenner.

"Moritz," she breathed, in hardly audible tones, "can you forgive the adulteress?"

"You are none, beloved wife," he replied, in a gentle, soothing voice. "You thought me dead. I know every thing."

She fell upon his neck. "Then go," she said, resolutely, "go, that I may not become one. Protect me from myself, my Moritz."

"I go," he answered. "I go consoled, for I know now that you still *love* me. I have known it since yesterday. I can renounce my claim to possessing you, but I cannot renounce your love."

One long, fervent, burning, consuming kiss—the first after fifteen years of separation, the last for life!

At that moment a country wagon came rattling at full speed into the court. Ingeborg, who had been standing by the window in the next room, cried out in her dismay, even before opening the door, "Madame, the count!"

There was a noise on the stairs; a few seconds,



and the door of the anteroom flew open. The count, in travelling-costume, entered, followed by Caritas, who had hastened to meet him. His valet, too, came in close on his heels, prompted by curiosity, to relieve him of his cloak and hat. But the count said, "There is no hurry, my good friend," and locked the door behind Caritas and himself.

"Do not be alarmed, my dear," he said to Agatha, who stood before him, trembling violently and deadly pale—"I come as a fugitive: Brahe and Horn were arrested yesterday. It is all over with them. Several others were arrested at the same time, and I have reason to fear that one of the scoundrels who is to be tried to-day will depose against me. If there were still a trace of justice in the land, they could do me no harm; but even the most guiltless is not safe from these cruel tyrants. I have put them on a wrong track. For a full day at least I am free from danger. Early at dawn to-day I sent my heavily-loaded travelling-carriage with my faithful Volkmar to Rödckrita. I only remained in the carriage till we had got to some distance beyond the gate; then I alighted cautiously, walked to the nearest farm-house, and hired one of their rickety wagons to bring me here to Söderwyk. I still feel its confounded jolting in all my limbs. I shall be safe here for to-night at least. They have doubtless sent a detachment of cavalry after me to Rödckrita, to arrest me, but even the fleetest horse cannot reach it under fourteen hours."

The count spoke breathlessly. He wished to appear unconcerned, but those who knew him could easily detect the deadliest apprehension in his voice.

"Let us fly," said Agatha, with colorless lips. "We can conceal ourselves in some peasant's hut in the mountains."

"Agatha! you look like a corpse! Poor wife! For this night we are safe. I need rest."

"Mamma," said Caritas, "we have a good hiding-place for papa here in the house. Nobody but Ingeborg knows that there is a large closet behind the linen-chamber in the gable, where, you know, the old Counts Kronhelm hid all their gold and silver from the Danish pirates. If we cover the partition wall with another hanging, no one will suspect that there is a door in it."

"That is good advice," observed the count. "The girl is shrewd."

Mannsfeld now approached. "Monsieur the count," he said, "your servants are aware of your arrival. You are not safe from betrayal. I would advise you urgently to withdraw as far as possible, until the danger is over. You have horses enough and a comfortable carriage, which will take you in a few nights and days to Gothenburg or Elsinore, where you will be safe, for you can only be so on board of an English vessel. You can drive around the cities on the outside, and none of the peasants will betray you. The storm is rising fearfully. Keep at a distance until it is over."

The count, who had sat down on a sofa, looked at him in painful doubt. It would have been hard to decide whether, at the moment, he was more concerned in mind or wearied in body.

Suddenly he started up. A half-suppressed noise

was heard in the court-yard. Horsemen had entered it as softly as possible; the servants came running from all sides; the talking of muffled men's voices was distinctly heard. "My pursuers!" cried the count, in mortal terror. A loud voice was heard to say, "Guard all the doors!"

"Well, then," said Mannsfeld, resolutely, "let us change parts, monsieur the count!" With these words, he quickly divested the count of his cloak, threw his own around him, and put his own cap upon his head. "The little door at the foot of that flight of stairs will take you safely into the garden. My horse stands ready saddled and loaded by the back gate. It will bring you to Nyköping before daylight. A Dantzic bark, the Polish Crown, skipper Jansen, is lying in the harbor there. Here is my passport. Here the receipt for the passage-money for Moritz Mannsfeld. Hasten! I shall take care that you gain such a start that none of your pursuers shall be able to reach you. Quick! The vessel is to sail to-morrow at sunrise."

He thrust the trembling count through the door of the dressing-room. "Go with him, Caritas," he said; "do not leave him until he is safely on horse-back." Caritas obeyed. He himself threw the count's cloak around him, and drew his hat down over his face.

While he was speaking, heavy steps and men's voices echoed through the house. Agatha's room was situated in the wing. The main building was apparently being searched first. The private backstairs were known to no one.

"Be calm, beloved," said Mannsfeld, as he with-

drew to the dressing-room, and darkened it completely, by closing the shutters. "I shall save your husband, the father of your boys. Compose yourself, dearest Agatha! there is no danger, either, for *my* wretched life."

At that moment there was a vehement knocking at the door. "Delay opening the door for a while," advised Mannsfeld; "that will give him more time."

A loud call was heard outside: "Open the door, Countess Kronhelm, in the name of the senate!"

Mannsfeld locked the door of the dressing-room behind him. Agatha kept quiet. She hardly ventured to breathe.

But the knocking grew louder, "Open, madame, or we must break the door!"

Agatha at length unlocked the door. She retreated to the centre of the room. A momentary courage came over her in this hour of urgent danger. An officer, a corporal, and two privates, burst into the room. She stood before them in all the majestic dignity of an offended lady of high rank.

"What has given you the right, monsieur the lieutenant, to enter this house and the apartment of a lady by force?" she demanded, with a look of indignation.

"The order of the senate, madame! Where is the count?"

"Is it proper for you to question me in this manner, sir? Is that the way in which a cavalier should address a lady?"

"Madame the countess, I have been commanded by the senate to arrest your husband. He is concealed here."

"You are mistaken. Count Kronhelm is not in this house."

"He is here, madame—all your servants testify against you. I know that he is concealed in this room"—he looked about him—"or in that one." He pointed to the door which led to the dressing-room.

"I swear to you, by God in heaven," cried Agatha, "that the count is not here. He is not in the house."

But when the officer advanced toward the dressing-room, she preceded him by a rapid movement, leaned with her back against the door, and cried :

"I shall never permit my wardrobe to be searched, as if I had been accused of theft. I swear to you again, that Count Kronhelm is not in there. He is not in this house."

"He is! He cannot have escaped. All the doors are guarded."

"Look for him elsewhere, then. He is not here."

"Let us go in, madame," cried the officer, impatiently. "Step back."

"I shall not step back. No lady of rank will submit to such indignities."

But he seized her roughly by the shoulder, and drew her aside in spite of her resistance. "Violence!" cried Agatha in terror.

Suddenly the door was unlocked from the inside. "Use your bravery against men, sir lieutenant," said a scornful voice. The officer and his companion entered the dark room; the privates, who, until then had remained by the outer door, rushed up and placed themselves in the door of the dressing-room, pushing Agatha out of their way.

Inside there was perfect darkness, except that a strip of the faint light of the evening twilight fell from the sitting-room through the open door.

A tall figure, wrapped in a cloak, a flat hat pushed far down over its face, stood leaning against the wall opposite the door.

"Monsieur the count," said the officer, "I arrest you in the name of the senate."

"Where is your order of arrest, lieutenant?"

"Here," replied the other, showing him the paper.

"It is not valid. The king's signature is wanting."

The officer, without considering that the other could not possibly have discovered this in the dark, replied:

"The king's seal is sufficient. You are my prisoner, monsieur the count."

But the corporal had had time to examine the dark figure more closely. The foreign accent had struck him suspiciously. He opened the shutter hastily.

"Sir lieutenant," he cried, "this is not Count Kronhelm!"

"Who told you that I was Count Kronhelm? I am a stranger, under the protection of the English ambassador, and shall call you to account if you lay hands on me."

"Where is the count?" cried the officer, furious at his mistake. "You have helped him to escape! He must be somewhere."

"There must be a door here somewhere. The fellow down-stairs said something about a back door," observed the corporal.

They were about to fall upon him. But Mannsfeld leaned still more firmly against the door. As he tried to spread his cloak more at the bottom, it slid from his shoulder, and disclosed his mutilated arm in its sling. A trace of the tapestry door became visible.

The officer as well as his subordinate rushed upon him. But he held his powerful right arm against them like a shield. "Let no one dare to touch me!" he cried.

The officer considered himself in the right. He drew his sword. The corporal followed his example. "If you love your life," cried the lieutenant, "make way!"

At this, Mannsfeld, with the rapidity of lightning, drew a pistol from his bosom, and prepared to fire. "Whoever touches me is lost! I will give you access to the door now, if you will put up your swords."

"Murder!" vociferated the lieutenant, who had sprung to one side at sight of the pistol. As Mannsfeld turned threateningly to the corporal, who still stood on his right with drawn sword, the officer, with the bound of a wild-cat, sprang upon his shoulder from the left, where his mutilated arm gave no means of defence, and half pulled him to the ground, while the corporal buried his sword in his body. The pistol went off in the hand of the falling man, the apartment was filled with the smoke of powder. The murderous weapon had contained no ball.

The murderers rushed across the body of their victim, out of the door, and down the stairs, the privates after them. Caritas, on her return by circuitous paths through the garden and the front door, followed

by the children and Ingeborg and the other women of the house, pale and trembling with terror, found her mother lying in unconsciousness beside the corpse of her father.

He had been still alive, still conscious, when the loving woman took him in her arms. "I die in your arms," he murmured with broken voice—"I am happy to die so. God has dealt more kindly with me than I had hoped. Continue to live for your children's sake! I have rescued their father for them. He will be Carry's father too."

The unfortunate man might perhaps have been saved, if there had been a surgeon at hand to stop the bleeding. The women laid him on the bed, cut open his clothes, and bound up the enormous, gaping wound as well as they could, but the skilful hand was wanting. Life had been long extinct when the surgeon, who had been sent for from a distance, at length arrived. Agatha still lay in a state of unconsciousness. Inconsolable and only upheld by the youthful vigor of an heroic nature, the young orphan hovered to and fro between the couches of her beloved parents.

The emissaries of the senate, after having examined the cellars, the garret, and the whole garden, rode away, cursing. Their leaders, overwhelmed with reproaches by some of the weeping maid-servants, did not venture to enter the house again. A gloomy, desolate silence brooded over the whole place.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### CONCLUSION.

MORE than two long, eventful months had passed. The friends of the king had paid, for the crime of attempting to alter the constitution, on the scaffold. The unhappy monarch, who, by a cruel decree of his tyrants, was deprived of the noblest privilege of crowned heads, the power of pardoning, could not save them nor hardly himself, indeed, except by solemnly declaring that he had not known any thing of the conspiracy raised in his favor. Those among his friends who were less implicated were outlawed, among them Count Kronhelm.

Mannsfeld was buried in the quiet garden at Söderwyk. A plain stone, overshadowed by a weeping-willow, marked the spot. The name of "Moritz Mannsfeld" was inscribed upon the stone, together with the words, "He died, murdered by the servants of the law, a victim to his magnanimity."

In the house Caritas still sat by her mother's sick-bed. When the unhappy woman at length awoke from her swoon, her mind was far away. The most celebrated physicians of Stockholm came and went,

but they could not check the passionate ravings of this fearfully-shaken soul. The patient spoke German, only German. She was in Silesia with her parents; the victorious Prussians were entering the captured fortress. She was sitting by *his* bedside. To her mind, which often seemed entranced, the past fifteen years were steeped in the deepest night of oblivion.

"Oh!" Caritas would think, "would it not be a blessing for the dear one, if she were never, never again to come to herself and to a consciousness of the truth? if God would take her now, now in her fancied happiness?"

But, generous though she was, it was only for a few moments that the young girl could endure the thought. Then she would sink down on her knees by the bedside, and pray to God the All-merciful to spare her mother to her. Sometimes her sobs would waken Agatha to momentary consciousness. "What ails you, dearest child?" she would ask, in a low voice. The daughter would sink upon her mother's bosom, and amid their mingled tears the latter would fall into a gentler sleep, and Caritas would creep into the garden, and weep out her sorrow on her father's grave.

The last few months of deep suffering had developed the girl's strong character to its full natural energy, which otherwise might not have been effected in as many years. There was no one among the household, no one in the neighborhood, none of the physicians and business-friends, who did not pay her the tribute of an unqualified admiration. To keep the house as quiet as possible, she had sent her little brothers to a country-pastor in the neighborhood of

their *château*, of whom she knew that her mother esteemed him highly. In order to obtain the necessary funds, she had, fearing that the income of Count Kronhelm's estates might not be paid over to his family as long as his name was not cleared from the accusations of his enemies, written betimes to her mother's business-agent in Germany, and obtained from his friendship a considerable advance on her income. She alone directed all household matters, transacted all necessary business, and was the chief nurse of her mother, reporting faithfully to the physicians, who left the execution of their directions to her with respectful confidence. All her duties were fulfilled with courage and resignation — only, during the first few days, when she, and she alone, caused the remains of her beloved father to be committed to the earth, and the dark secret of his death veiled the still darker mystery of his life, her poor young heart almost broke.

Time, by which all wounds, if not healed, are yet *bound up* with tender hand, so that they no longer bleed *incessantly*, and finally reopen only now and then at some ruthless touch, at last exercised its irresistible power also on the stricken mother and daughter. The first hour in which Agatha's mind was sufficiently clear, was employed by Caritas in communicating to her that the count had reached Dantzic in safety, had gone from there to Hamburg, and was at that time in England. She had addressed a letter to him there, in which she told him of the devoted death of his faithful friend, and of her mother's wretched state. But she took good care not to show the latter the answer to this communication which she received,

for in it the count expressed, indeed, deep regret at both circumstances; but at the same time, in his over-wise, dogmatic, egoistic manner, had given it as his opinion that the unfortunate man might have avoided so fatal an end, if he had acted with less heroism in aiding his flight, and made use of more shrewdness in putting his pursuers on a wrong track; that the days of heroism were past, and that shrewdness alone could stay the violent measures of the encroaching powers, etc., etc. Caritas crushed the letter in her hand in burning indignation, without reading it to the end. She still felt in her arm the trembling of the frightened count, as she led him through the dark garden-paths to the back gate, and helped him mount Mannsfeld's horse, and her father's heroic form stood before her in redoubled glory.

It was only much later that she ventured to communicate to her mother Mannsfeld's last letter, which, resolved to leave, he had finished on the day before his intended departure, and had probably commenced shortly after he had disclosed to her who he was.

This letter contained a sketch of the history of this unfortunate man, whom Fate had so cruelly cheated out of his life. May the reader here cast a pitying glance upon it!

“MY CARITAS, MY CHILD:

“Yes, I may call you so. This one ray of light was permitted to fall into the night of my life to make its darkness still darker, still more melancholy.

“And yet this is not always my feeling. Often, too, since I have found you, it has seemed to me as if

the consciousness of being able to call one creature on earth my own, of knowing one human soul which clings to me, which feels for me, had given me new courage for the struggle of life.

“I have promised, my beloved daughter, to give you a sketch of my life, which has been such a terrible failure. You shall learn, you must learn, to know what has prevented me from asserting, in riper years, the just claims to happiness to which the Almighty had entitled me in my youth. You must know my history, to be able still to esteem me.

“It would have been different, if, as I had intended, I had left you without disclosing to you who I was. Beloved, amiable child! no blush need tinge your cheek, when I tell you the reasons which induced me to make myself known to you. I saw with deep emotion that your young, innocent heart had fallen captive to a complete self-delusion. That which drew you to me so powerfully was nothing but the natural magnetism of hearts, which is in itself not rare among near blood relations, but in your case was increased, by the peculiar harmony existing between our individual characters, to an irresistible impulse. Perhaps, too, the deep, fervent pity for an unhappy man, which only a woman’s heart can experience, had more influence on your feeling than you were aware of. That you yourself were deceived in your sentiments, was but according to Nature, and there was not a moment when this touch of enthusiasm did not make you appear to me far more worthy of love and esteem than if I had known you only in the dim twilight surrounding an able pupil.

“If this exalted condition of your soul, which you yourself did not comprehend, finally induced me to make myself known to you, I feel also how much I benefited myself, and indeed your mother, in so doing. For it was only thus, only by being in possession of my unhappy secret, that you could, after my departure be a stay and a solace to the dear one whose heart was beginning to move tumultuously in like dark, unconscious affinity. And to me there remained, in the renewed solitude which I had voluntarily chosen from the deepest sense of duty, the one great consolation of your filial love.

“From my last letter to your mother, you know my unhappy fate up to the nocturnal December revolution in Russia. I was at first, without a shadow of an inquiry, kept in tolerably supportable confinement with Colonel von Haimburg, a weak-headed and generally innoxious creature; then, likewise without being brought to trial, or even undergoing an examination in prison, we were both sent to Siberia, to separate points, though without being in any way maltreated. For the czarina only wished to have us far away, far away every thing which was connected with the Regent Anna, because the vicinity of any one who had been in the service of the deposed couple kept her in a state of constant apprehension. With all the outrageous injustice of which I was the victim, I was yet treated with comparative indulgence. Berezov, whither I was taken, is not in reality the chief town of a government department. But the commandant stationed there, who is subject to the Governor of Tobolsk, also receives the honorary title of governor,

which keeps him in good-humor. He was a man of coarse manners and very little mind, but kind-hearted by nature. He made me the tutor of his only son, more with the intention, probably, of making me his servant, for he was perfectly arbitrary in his domain.

“But the son—one of those loving, frank, tender natures, which Providence destines only for a short existence—attached himself to me with filial affection; ay, thirsting for knowledge, and long since yearning dimly to work his way out of the mental slough in which his position held him confined, he looked up to me with a sort of adoration, as to the one who was to open purer sources for him. No wonder that I too learned to love the boy! He became my instructor in Russian, while I taught him German and French, and such of the sciences as were appropriate to his age. I contrived to keep him out of his father’s way, when the latter had been drinking, and thus guarded him and myself from the abuses with which the miserable fellow, when in that state, was wont to overwhelm those in particular who endeavored to evade his disgusting caresses; so that just those whom he loved, and above all his adored son, were in such cases most exposed to maltreatment.

“As I lived in the house of Gromoff, the so-called governor, and therefore shared, with the chief man of the town, the few comforts of life which a dreary place like Berezov afforded, I could easily bear my exile in Siberia as far as physical wants were concerned, particularly when I compare my situation with the fearful solitude in which Count Münnich in Pelim, Ostermann, and Löwenwolde, and other dis-

tinguished men, in their several totally-desolate places of banishment, have been dragging away their shamefully-stinted lives now for fifteen years, whenever death has not kindly released them. A German doctor, whom his fate had cast away in this spot, under the terrible rule of Peter, afforded me some communication with the outer world by means of a Moscow paper, which was rarely less than three months old when I obtained a chance to read it. I learned from it, shortly before my flight, that a peace between Prussia and Austria was in prospect, which at least insured to your mother a quiet home. Her image lit up my soul wondrously. Young, vigorous, and full of trust in God's guidance, as I was, I hoped with certainty to be reunited to her before long. As yet I looked upon the separation from her as the heaviest burden which the Almighty had given me to bear, and not for a moment did I relinquish the hope that His hand would lead me out of this darkness.

"After eight or nine months of a life in which heart and mind were alike famished, young Alexander Gromoff fell seriously ill. The hectic color in his cheeks had for some time already made me feel concerned about him. Now I soon saw clearly, and Dr. Brenner confirmed me in this view, that his disease was the inheritance of his mother, a gentle, delicate creature, who had died of consumption a few years after the birth of her child. The interest which I showed him, and the natural consequence of which was an all the more affectionate care on my part, increased to the utmost the enthusiastic attachment which drew him toward me. He would hardly suffer



me to leave him. As is often the case, in his disease he had no suspicion of his approaching death. He made a thousand plans as to how he would endeavor to ease and beautify my life when he should be well again, and it was all the harder for me to conceal my sorrow, since I felt how, with his life, the sole small taper would be extinguished which lighted up the night about me.

“At length the rude, unrestrained grief of his father destroyed the boy’s illusion. He soon submitted to the will of God with pious resignation, and it touched me deeply that his grateful care was ere long directed toward his beloved teacher. I do not know by what means he succeeded in persuading his father to swear to him, by every variety of saint, that, after his own death, he would afford me the opportunity of escaping, as soon as he could do so without danger to himself. The old man stood in far less dread of the czarina and the distant imperial city, than of his superior, the governor of Tobolsk, who wished him ill, and watched him closely, because, as the other asserted, he intended his post for another. He was, as it were, the sovereign of all Siberia, and, in Grömoff’s opinion, kept his eye constantly upon him and those exiled since Elizabeth’s accession to the throne.

“A few weeks after Alexander’s death, a case really occurred in which, without danger to himself, he could assist me to escape. But I was to pay dearly for my flight—not only with my name, but also with an oath not to return to Germany to my family, nor to give them notice of my escape. Of course, I rejected my liberation unhesitatingly on such condi-

tions. But the non-fulfilment of the vow Gromoff had made weighed upon his conscience. We at length compromised on my keeping away entirely for three years from Germany and my wife; I was even obliged to swear that I would not, under three years, inform the latter of my escape, or let her know where I was. In this way alone did he think himself safe from the danger of being called to account. The circumstances were these:

“A Greek of high rank, or rather a Moldavian by birth, had obtained more favor with the Empress Anna than was convenient to her lover and tyrant Biron. He thought it advisable to put him out of the way before the connection should become dangerous to himself. The unfortunate man, under some pretext, was sent to Siberia, with the order that he should be detained there ten years, and then, furnished with passports, should be sent to the Turkish frontier. It was supposed that the empress had never known of this measure; on the contrary, Biron had made her believe that the young prince had suddenly returned to his native land, and thus roused her resentment and wrath against the unhappy victim.

“The family of this half-forgotten exile, resident in Jassy, had interceded in his behalf with the empress regent when Biron was overthrown by her; in consequence of the complicated nature of the affair, however, as well as the great distances over which communications had to pass, it had not really been agitated till after a new change of government. As nothing could be advanced against the banished prince that could stand in the way of any of the fa-

vorites of the Czarina Elizabeth, the latter had easily made up her mind to pardon him. But the imperial order arrived when the unfortunate man was lying on his death-bed, about two years before the expiration of his term of banishment. I was now to receive my freedom as this Prince Stephen Ghika, while he was buried as Moritz Hohenhorst. As the pardon only shortened the time of his exile, but did not revoke the order to send him to the Turkish frontier at its expiration, Gromoff still considered himself bound by the latter decree, or rather made use of it for my liberation. I was provided with a passport in Ghika's name; and a purseful of gold, a watch, some papers, and the like, which the unhappy man had had on his person at the commencement of his banishment, and which the governor had taken charge of for him, were delivered over to me.

"Thus I was packed into a sleigh, with two of the military officials who serve the Siberian governors as an executive police, without knowing exactly what was to be my destination; for the distance between Berezov, or, indeed, any part of Siberia and the Turkish frontier, is immense, and the whole order, by which it was evidently intended that the Moldavian, his exile ended, should be finally sent back to his home, was doubtless drawn up by Biron in an hour of jealous anger, but without the slightest knowledge of the situation. But to Gromoff this signified quite as little as it would have signified to the majority of Russian officials. According to his geographic ideas, Turkey comprised all of Asia that was not China, or, like Siberia, subject to Russia. He would therefore have found it

most convenient to send me to free Tartary, the nearest boundary of the Russian empire. But the road thither led over Tobolsk, and it was of the utmost importance to him to avoid this and the possible interference of the governor there. The chief thing to be considered was haste. He therefore did not delay to send me in a sleigh by way of Kazan—an immense distance—to one of the minor ports of the Volga. Thence a small vessel—for this wonderful stream remains navigable, in its most southern parts, through the depths of winter—was to take me to Astrakhan, where my companions were to place me on one of the Turkish merchantmen which were said to be lying there.

“I suspect that Gromoff mistook the Caspian Sea for the Black Sea. Perhaps, indeed, he only confounded Persia with Turkey. Of the *boundaries* of Turkey he knew only the lines of Procopius, because the doctor had read to him from the paper that Münnich, with his brave Russians, had taken them by storm a few years ago.

“The governor’s orders were fulfilled. The Russian surgeon and his companion put me on board of a Persian vessel, as no Turkish ship was to be found, and as, on the former as well as the latter, the captain and crew were Mohammedans, and wore the *fez*. They remained on board until the time of sailing, so as to prevent my treading on Russian soil, for which I verily had no inclination.

“*I was now free!* O Caritas, what a feeling of bliss, to be *free* after an imprisonment of two years! But this was indeed all at which I could rejoice, for my plans were again destroyed. I had intended to

enter the Turkish army. I detested the war-service as a *trade*; I had once only chosen a military career as the road to chivalric honor. The idea of fighting with Mussulmans, and perhaps against Christians, was repugnant to me. But what was left to me? I had made the plan of seeking out Bonneval without delay. I knew that he was a renegade, and could not esteem him. But quite as little could I refrain from admiring him. He was the man to recognize what was in me. He would have given me an officer's commission. It was my wish to spend the three wretched years of my banishment in Turkey, to struggle through them at least in circumstances which did not entirely cut off my communication with Europe. What could I do in Persia—without the slightest knowledge of the language, the manners and customs, or any thing connected with the country? The military fame of Shah Nadir had resounded also in Europe a few years before. But it seemed to me as if a conflict with the Mongolians would crowd my reunion with my beloved wife still more into the background. I therefore adhered to my plan in spite of these new difficulties, and, after having been for some months tossed about mercilessly and with horrible experiences, I finally succeeded in joining a caravan which was going from Teheran to Erzroom.

“Since our entrance into the bay of Retch, it had been the chief aim of my life to become sufficiently familiar with the language of the country to at least make myself understood. On board the vessel I had been aided by the small stock of Italian possessed by one of the merchants. Now I found here and there a

Russian tradesman, or a deserter of that nation, with whom I could talk. In Teheran I had for some weeks made it my exclusive occupation to learn the Persian colloquial language, and, with the aid of the Moldavian's inheritance, had even engaged a teacher. For the ample leisure which the journey with the caravan promised me, I had supplied myself with a Turkish grammar, and the amazement with which my traveling companions continually praised my industry, at last grew quite burdensome to me. Moreover, necessity not only teaches us to *pray*,\* but also to *learn*. When we reached Erzroom, I could help myself along, to some degree, by expressing my wants.

"But I could not carry out my plan. Bonneval was in a kind of disgrace, and lived in retirement, and at a distance from the army. I saw no means of reaching him, and necessity finally forced me to enlist without his influence. The government was just then recruiting very actively, and that—of which I could have no suspicion—against Persia. For the great victories of Shah Nadir in India had made his might terrible also for the more Western powers, and it was suspected that he would endeavor to extend his rule also in that direction. Soon a bloody border-war broke out—no actual war; a wild, cruel carnage, which filled with me horror. I soon succeeded in rising to the rank of an officer, and myself becoming the leader of an uncivilized horde. The supremacy in Georgia was one of the bloody apples of discord between the Oriental powers, and remained so. In a wild skirmish I received a wound in the head, which cost me my left

\* German proverb: "Necessity teaches us to pray."

eye. I lay for a long time in entire unconsciousness; but, probably by a mistake, in being taken for a Persian officer instead of a Turkish one, I was taken up with a heap of other half-dead men, and carried to a kind of hospital which had been established in one of the border-towns of Khoozistan.

“Now, it so happened that a young Persian of noble family was also lying in this hospital, badly wounded. His father, a man of high station and great erudition, had come the long distance from Sheeraz, where he lived, to seek out his dangerously-wounded son, and, if possible, take him home, where he could be better taken care of. The son was a wild, reckless fellow, who gave the worthy man great cause for sorrow. He died, and the father bore his loss with truly Oriental composure. His kind care, however, was now directed to others among the wounded, and it was I in particular who soon absorbed his undivided interest. As soon as my condition made it possible, he had me packed in pillows and rugs, and conveyed to Sheeraz with much trouble and expense. All that the East can afford of domestic comfort and luxury, was lavished upon me. My benefactor himself was versed in medical skill, although theology and jurisprudence were in reality his professions—two branches of learning which are often united in the East. My eye could not be saved; but otherwise I soon regained, under the best of care, the most vigorous health.

“Hadji Tschelebi—such was the name of this excellent man—enjoyed great distinction as a scholar, as well as on account of his piety. His life was so pure, and his kindness and benevolence so unbounded, that

in Europe I should unhesitatingly have called him the best Christian whom I had ever met; but he acted only according to the laws of the Koran, and even declared that he had with difficulty overcome an inward inclination to rebel against them. In his family he was not fortunate. It seemed as if Nature had exhausted itself in his mental endowments; his sons, in spite of a careful education, had remained simpletons and blockheads, and two of the four were, besides, coarse bullies, who, from the first, had caused him more sorrow than joy. This misfortune, too, he bore with great composure, and consoled himself with the reflection: 'It is the will of Allah! Allah be praised!'

"The worthy man had soon recognized that God's will had thrown in his way, in me, a character of a different stamp. He had resolved that I should take the place of the son whom he had lost. It had long been his wish to attach to himself a European of learning, who could be his teacher and pupil at the same time, the translator of his works into some of the European languages, and the reproductive recipient of his ideas. During the five years which I spent with him, I acted in all these capacities: I became his secretary, his teacher, his pupil, his confidant, his son. I thanked God for the welcome haven which He had opened to me for the three years during which I had sworn to remain at a distance from your mother. At the expiration of that time, I felt I *must* go to Germany, at least to Europe. For it was my plan to enter the army of some European country, and I trusted firmly in your mother's love, which would induce her to fol-



low me wherever I went. Meanwhile I devoted all my mental powers to my Oriental studies, partly from real interest in them, partly too because in this way only I could prove to my benefactor my entire gratitude.

“ I did not feel that my oath made it incumbent upon me to await the full expiration of the three years, before writing to your mother, for at least two or three months must pass, before a letter from Sheeraz could reach Silesia. Even before that, I had made some attempts to inform her, in few words and without signature, of my rescue, without hinting where I was, still less *how* I had escaped. But, as I feared at the time, and know now, none of these missives ever reached Agatha. From the wild scenes of war, which were in no connection with Europe, I had only tried to send them to Constantinople, whenever an opportunity offered, by merchants, government messengers, etc., who were to forward them by the very imperfect postal communication which connects the Ottoman empire with Christian Europe. They were, however, probably thrown aside as soon as the money which I had saved for that purpose had been received. Now, Hadji Tschelebi, who had connections in the whole country, promised to forward a letter safely to Ispahan, whence an embassy was just about to be dispatched to Paris, in response to the civility of the French court, who had shortly before sent a brilliant deputation to Shah Nadir, in order to undermine the influence which England was acquiring by way of India. My letter was safely dispatched, and arrived sooner than I had indeed ventured to hope. Quite as

safely, quite as quickly, the answer came back to me, like an awful thunder-bolt !

“My Caritas !—all that love, the truest, deepest love, could put into words, was contained in my letter. My plan was, to enter the English service. My generous friend had offered to assist me with the necessary funds. I begged Agatha to come to England. I did not wish to return to Germany before I had regained a military appointment. At the same time I enclosed a letter to my uncle and former guardian in Brunswick, and gave the worthy man a full account of my experiences.

“After four months of weary waiting, I received a letter postmarked Wildeneck, forwarded from France. Breathlessly I opened it. It was in stiff, old-fashioned writing, not my wife’s unpractised but delicate hand. A look of apprehension, cast upon the signature, showed me the names: ‘Countess Promnitz, at the request and by command of Count E. C. Promnitz.’ At the same moment a small object wrapped in paper fell from the envelope, which I still held in my left hand, to the floor. I took it up. It was a ring, the wedding-ring which I had placed upon my Agatha’s hand five years before. ‘She is dead !’ I cried, in horror.

“Caritas ! If she had been dead, I should have borne it like a man, like a man bereft of all his hopes of happiness for this life, but resigned to the will of God, in the hope of a speedy reunion beyond. But the direful letter brought me far more cruel tidings. She was not dead. She was only dead for me, and became so in giving me a stab which deprived me of the sole possession which was still dearer to me than

she, my honor. I cannot repeat the words of the fearful letter exactly ; I only know that it commenced with these :

“‘BARON MORITZ VON HOHENHORST :

“‘It is exclusively from *politesse* that I still address you as a nobleman, after you have been cashiered and deprived of your title by his majesty our gracious king. It is with surprise and the utmost amazement that my husband, as well as myself, have gathered from your letter, that, notwithstanding your having now for so many years been cast about the world as an idle adventurer, you still lay claim to the hand of the countess of the empire, Agatha von Promnitz, as well as the property which will at some future day fall to her by inheritance,’ etc.

“This was the tone, this the spirit, of the whole letter. I would not repeat its words to you even if I remembered them. The writer communicated to me that my wife no longer acknowledged her marriage with a deserter, who had in consequence been cashiered and deprived of his title ; that she had applied for a divorce on the ground of desertion, and had obtained it, and that she was already married again to a nobleman of unstained name and high rank, Count Balke—thus she wrote the name—in Paris, for which reason she herewith returned to me her wedding-ring, etc.

“No words can depict the impression which this letter made upon me. It was not Agatha who had written it. Had it been written in her name, I should have detected the deception ; but, drawn up as it was

in a stiff, unpractised female hand, interlarded with pious phrases and German-French expressions, I, without a suspicion that Agatha's own mother lay in her grave and her place was so shamefully filled, did not doubt for a moment that Countess Benigna had written it, and that Agatha, weak, without character, and with youthfully superficial feelings, had acted under her influence, and was totally estranged from the unhappy man who had once wakened her girlish interest by the new experience of his love. The ring which was enclosed in the letter vouched for this.

"I was in a fearful state. I hardly knew whether rage or grief had the upper hand at first. It is certain that it was not the former which helped me to conquer the latter, but it helped me suppress it outwardly, that is, to show a manly fortitude in presence of my adopted father, who, after the manner of the Orientals, had but a low opinion of women, and was not at all surprised at this turn of affairs, although he had never pained me by unkind prophecies. From this time I devoted myself still more exclusively to my studies, and a few years passed in outward quiet.

"But in the year 1747 the great prince died, who had held together the extended realm. Persia was agitated by bloody revolutions, and was rent in pieces. In fair Sheeraz, too, there was no longer any peace for learned occupations. Hadji Tschelebi resolved upon a new pilgrimage to Mecca. I, in the feeling that outward storms would be the best means of keeping down those within me, and also not without fear that such constant studies might extinguish the partial light which was all that remained to me, decided on

once more entering upon a military life. I chose the army of Kandahar. An Afghan, Ahmed Abdallah, reigned there, and his troops stood opposed to the invading forces of the Great Mogul, for the death of the terrible Shah Nadir was gladly taken advantage of by the subjugated neighboring principalities for defection and revenge. My adopted father had supplied me with money and letters of introduction. Consequently I immediately received a high appointment. There was opportunity enough for deeds of valor, and, after the indignities which I had experienced from my nearest friends, the distinction and esteem received from these strangers were most gratifying.

“It would carry me too far to tell you in detail how, amid wild adventures, I found my way to the Mahrattas, to Lahore and Deccan, and nearer and nearer to the British possessions. I might have reached the point of being one of the chief leaders of these benighted tribes, but the hand of God interfered. I lost my left arm in a bloody battle. My convalescence was slow. When I had but half-recovered, the small-pox broke out with great violence among the troops, seized also upon me, and disfigured me in such a degree that I reëntered upon life a different creature, as it were.

“I now bade adieu to warfare, resigned my commission, and went to Bombay, with the intention of returning thence to Persia as soon as I could learn that the Hadji was again in Sheeraz. Instead, however, I was met there by the intelligence of his death. The excellent man had left me in his will a considerable sum, which was sent me by his sons, with the dying

blessing of their venerable father, to Bombay. Here I again lived for some time, quietly absorbed in study, with the particular object of a thorough acquisition of the Sanscrit language. But, though I had outwardly adopted the stoic composure of the Orientals, I was far from being calm within, and, seized by a vague longing for Europe, I at length departed for England.

“My return to Europe marked the beginning of a new period in my fearfully-desolated life. I doubt whether I can call it a happier one than that which preceded it. Yet time had imperceptibly made me more calm and resigned. My first object now was to find a decent means of subsistence, for the expenses of the journey had exhausted my funds. By teaching, translating, and writing articles, particularly for military journals, I managed to support myself, while I still had ample leisure for reading and mental improvement. Thus the librarian from Stockholm found me, and I accepted his proposition, to accompany him to Sweden for the purpose of regulating the Oriental department of the Royal Library, without hesitation. For I had a great desire to know more of Scandinavia, and could thus easily earn enough to defray the expenses of a future journey through that country, so remarkable for its peculiar natural features. To the librarian’s surprise, I had already in a few months completed the labor for which he had calculated at least a year. He was niggardly enough to pay me *according to time*. The sum I thus earned was not sufficient for the execution of my travelling-plans. Thus circumstances induced me to accept Count Kronhelm’s most

unexpected proposition. I had always been fond of children. True, the thought of living in a family-circle, after I myself had been so cruelly deprived by Fate of all share in such happiness, was repugnant to me. But I was driven by necessity; the count's offer was a liberal one, and my condition, of being allowed to dissolve the connection whenever I saw fit, left me in possession of my liberty. I therefore accepted his proposition.

"Strange, mysterious fatality, which, by the way of necessity, and the effort of gaining my livelihood, was to lead me back to my wife, and enable me to gain possession of my child!

"I have now reached one of the most fearful moments of my life—perhaps, if I except that in which I received that fatal letter, the most overwhelming. When I found myself in the presence of your mother—when she stood before me in her perfectly-developed, heavenly beauty, in the noblest womanly dignity, graciously and affably welcoming the unfortunate stranger with cordial words, as a dear compatriot—it seemed as if I had suddenly gone mad! It was she, it was Agatha, my wife, my false, disloyal wife! It was her voice, her sweet, tender, caressing voice that first convinced me. I had never had the most distant thought that I should meet her here, in this remote country. In London, at a coffee-house, I had once happened to hear a traveller, who had just come from Paris, mention the 'beautiful Countess Balke.' This was the form given to the name in the fatal letter, thus it was pronounced in France, and it had never entered my mind that it was in any way connected

with Sweden. I was struck as by a blow in hearing it; and, when the young puppy went on to tell how she had shone at some festivity in splendor and wealth of attire, and had been the queen of the *soirée*, I was so forcibly seized by the consciousness of the horrible irony of the fate which had made of me an exiled, inactive cripple, bereft of honor and of means, while it showered upon her, the companion it had once assigned to me, as if in sport, every flower and blossom of existence, that it was only with the utmost exertion that I could rouse myself and withdraw from the society of men.

“Though, since the receipt of that outrageous letter, the thought had often crossed my diseased brain that I would seek out the unworthy woman who had deserted me so cruelly, overwhelm her with reproaches, and, if she repented, cast her from me, I now swore to myself that I would never, *never* see her again; to avoid every possibility of meeting her; never set foot in France, Italy, or Germany, again. It seemed to me as if Providence itself, which had so richly endowed her with all the blessings of life, while it had robbed *me* of them, had itself opened an impassable gulf between us. And now I suddenly stood close, close before her—before Agatha!

“The night which followed was awful! Early the next morning I gathered all the force which was left to me, to go to the librarian who had made me acquainted with Count Kronhelm. I heard from him, at the same time that he spoke of the countess with a kind of adoration, that the count had adopted the name of Kronhelm only a few years ago, on account



of an inheritance; that he had formerly been called Balke, but now, as heir to the Kronhelm estates, bore the name of Balke-Kronhelm, and was generally designated only as Count Kronhelm; that his wife, a German countess of the empire by birth, had previously been married to a Prussian officer, and had a daughter by her first husband, whom the count treated as his own child, etc.

“A daughter—a daughter of fourteen by her first husband! my precious Caritas! No words can express the feeling which penetrated me when the good man casually mentioned this circumstance. I felt as the condemned man must feel who has already laid his head upon the block, and to whom is communicated the merciful decree that his sentence of death is commuted to imprisonment for life. It was, indeed, *life* alone which was granted to me. I still lived in my child! But what a life was it? I had a daughter, but I must not acknowledge her. She must not call me father. Another was in possession of her filial love. And yet it was your existence which, after the most painful struggles, at last made me decide to accept the position as tutor. I could still hope to become your spiritual father, your guide through life. What part of this final decision was owing to the unconscious desire to see your mother again, to breathe the atmosphere which surrounded her, I will not venture to determine.

“I saw you, my child, and your deep, soulful eyes, your expressive features, showed me at the first glance what a rich, fruitful field lay ready for cultivation here. Let it be a solace to you for life, my Cari-

tas, that it was you who cast the first ray of light into the night of my existence—your mind, which was as ready to receive as your heart was ready to give.

“Nevertheless, hardly a day passed when I did not tell myself that I must go; for I could no longer deceive myself with regard to the feelings which had awakened within me with unconquerable power: Indeed, it was not merely the enchanting beauty of the rose, only now fully expanded, which, as a bud, I had once called my own, that drew me toward her almost irresistibly; I had to see her as mistress of a household, as mother, ay, as the wife of another, *highly-esteemed* man, to recognize her full, inestimable worth. And what was my position with regard to the count? How! should I deceive him, who, with generous confidence, had opened to me the sanctuary of his home; had confided to my care his dearest earthly treasures, his children? Should I continue to deceive him, after stealing into his house under a false name?

“And yet I remained, partly on your account, partly induced by that unconquerable feeling. Aside from a passionately-awakened love, there was in my heart a deep bitterness toward her, because of the unprincipled weakness with which, by her parents’ advice and command, she had renounced the man to whom she had sworn to be true. For it was only thus that I could explain her conduct, after I had seen her again, and her lofty moral dignity exercised upon me, in our daily intercourse, an irresistible influence.

“Once more: fearfully at variance with myself, amid constant struggles, I remained. Nothing was left to me but to keep at a harsh, unnatural distance

from her. O my daughter! the day arrived when you disclosed to me the true state of affairs; the day when you came to me with eyes red with weeping, and sought for your father's last resting-place on the map. You did not suspect that by your disclosure you conferred on me the greatest benefit ever conferred on me by any human being: my loving wife's journey into the wilderness, the death of the old countess, the circumstances which had induced the desolate young widow to marry again, the infamous deception practised by her step-mother—the scales fell from my eyes! From that moment I was another man. She had never ceased to love me. Yes, I felt it, I knew it, she loved me still. I—I only had the right to possess her. I had never resigned this right. The count's claims were founded on a deception. Agatha was mine. I would make myself known to her, to the count.

“But what could I offer her—her, the titled lady, the wife of a man of recognized honor, whose position before the world was a brilliant one, whose relation to her was dignified, kind, and most estimable? I, poor, dishonored, mutilated to a useless cripple? should I make the beloved, adored one, the wife of such as I? and, oh shame! make her noble boys illegitimate?—I felt that I *must* go. I resolved to leave. I wrote to the count, and requested my dismissal.

“The thought of making myself known to you, beloved child, and thus making sure of the consolation of a close tie between myself and at least one precious human being, had often arisen within me. I was only deterred from so doing by the just fear of thereby clouding your relation to your mother. For

there should always be perfect truth between mother and daughter. At the beginning of this letter, dearest, I have touched upon the reasons which decided me, after all, in favor of this disclosure. But never, never let your mother know who the unhappy stranger was who at first roused her sympathy only as a suffering inmate of her household, worthy of pity, but toward whom, ere long, she too was drawn by an uncomprehended affinity, a mysterious magnetism of the heart, which all her virtue, all her womanly dignity, could not conquer, but to which she doubtless would never have succumbed. I go, I hasten my departure, to restore to the beloved one the peace of her soul. I take with me the consolation of knowing that her heart is still mine. I must and can live without possessing her, but not without her love.

“Once more, dear child, never let her know who I am. For this reason, too, I must now break off all intercourse with you, for a secret correspondence would not be befitting in you as a daughter, and rob your relation to her of its purity. To your firm, heroic spirit, my daughter, I confide my secret, and found on it the hope of the restoration of your mother’s peace of mind. It will always be a solace to me that I have at least opened to you the portal of the temple of knowledge, which has such an irresistible charm for you. I enclose the address of a London banking-house. Through it you can always reach me, *if necessary*. Write to me if you need me—only in that case, precious, beloved child. You can feel what an enormous sacrifice I am making for your mother’s happiness, by laying this command upon you as my last wish.

"The blessing of the Almighty be with you, my Caritas! He will at last also have mercy on me.

"Your unhappy father,

"M. v. H."

Six more years passed by, before affairs in Sweden were in so far changed that the *Caps* at length gained the upper hand, and the *Hats* succumbed. But neither the people nor the opponents of the fallen party were benefited by this change. For Count Kronhelm, however, it had the advantage that he was at length permitted to return to his native country and his family. He had frequently expressed the desire that the latter should follow him to England, and Agatha, ever accustomed to obey his wishes, had taken the necessary steps at home. But she was told that, in case she and her children emigrated, she would incur the danger of having the proscription of the count extended also to his family, and their estates confiscated, and that the only means of securing to her sons their inheritance was to remain quietly in the country, and wait for better times. The count, therefore, renounced his wish, and bade her stay in Sweden.

This decision lifted a heavy weight from Agatha's heart. With pious submission she had learned to bear her fate; obediently, too, she had prepared to follow her husband's behest and leave Söderwyk, where, since that fearful day, she had passed summer and winter. But this spot had now become her heart's home, and the departure from it would have robbed her of her sole consolation, her daily visit to *his* grave.

But selfishness was as far from her noble heart in sorrow as in happiness. Her darling boys had been sent, according to an agreement by letter with the count, to a highly-esteemed school, and she enjoyed their caressing presence only during their vacations. But she did not wish Caritas, either, to waste her youth in such loneliness. In spite of all her daughter's generous resistance, she sent her, a few years later, under the richly-remunerated guidance of a reduced lady of rank, to England, there to be henceforth her step-father's companion, and complete her education under his wise supervision.

This was entirely in accordance with Count Kronhelm's wishes. He took his step-daughter, of whom he was proud, to France, to Italy; gave her, wherever they temporarily stopped, every advantage for brilliant and at the same time thorough instruction, and took great pleasure, as he felt himself growing older, in her loving care and attention. Caritas saw the world spread before her with delight; but her most precious hours were those in which, in long, long letters, she could open her heart to her mother in her quiet solitude at home.

When at length, after the lapse of years, the travellers returned to Sweden, the count was visibly startled at the sight of his wife. Instead of the forty years which she numbered, a stranger would have taken her for nearly sixty. The lovely roundness of form, which had been one of her charms, had fallen away to an unhealthy thinness. Her glorious golden hair had become scanty and completely gray. The brilliancy of her eyes was dimmed by tears. The

dazzling whiteness of her skin alone remained, owing, probably, to the Northern atmosphere in which she had lived, as well as the deep, soulful eye from which her pure spirit shone out.

The count proposed that they should go to Germany, take possession of her inherited estates—for Countess Aurora, too, was dead—and then visit some one of the celebrated German baths, which might be beneficial to her. But when she refused, he was in reality well pleased, for he was growing old and infirm, and longed for the quiet of home. And this he enjoyed in the fullest measure when he retired, with his family and his books, to Rödskrita, for he wished to keep aloof from all political disturbances. Agatha, too, went thither gladly. Her daily pilgrimages to Moritz's grave might have seemed improper, as long as she did not disclose her secret to her husband, which, after a long struggle with herself, she had concluded not to do—more for his sake and that of Moritz's memory, than for her own, for she felt herself pure.

A few years later the count died, after a short, painless illness. He repeatedly expressed his satisfaction at escaping, here on his lonely estate, the intrusiveness of his Stockholm spiritual adviser, who considered the strictest Old-Lutheranism the only road to salvation. To the more unassuming village-pastor he would have but little to say. But his philosophy had made him only a deist, not an atheist, and he died *hoping* for a reunion, thanking Agatha and Caritas for having cheered and beautified the evening of his life by their love and kindness.

The countess now returned to Söderwyk, and the feeling that she might again cherish Moritz's memory in her heart in perfect love, without committing a sin, made her gradually calmer and more cheerful. When, one evening, Caritas came to her with embarrassed look and glowing cheeks, and, throwing herself upon her breast, begged her dear mother to read a letter which she had received, adding that her life's happiness depended on her reception of it, she could bestow the warmest sympathy upon her daughter, and dream over the dream of love with her once more.

The young girl had made the acquaintance, in Italy, of a young Englishman, of noble family, but, as the third son of a wealthy lord, mostly limited to earning his livelihood by his mental powers; at any rate, not in a position to offer his hand to a girl like Caritas, as long as she was not in possession of her maternal property. They had parted without a decided explanation, yet not without hope. In Caritas's heart the separation only had fanned the flickering flame into the full fire of love; her lover had acted with more self-consciousness, but also with the generous resolve not to bind her. During the long years of separation, however, he had kept her image in his heart; and now, when he had acquired an honorable and independent position, had won esteem as a liberal political writer, and become a member of Parliament, he asked permission of Caritas to come to Sweden and win her love.

He came, and a clear ray of happiness once more illumined Agatha's heart when she saw her daughter happy. The dear boys, too, grew up into fine youths,



and gave her fond heart less occasion for anxiety than for joy. But nothing could induce her to yield to their fervent entreaties to accompany them on their journeys through Great Britain, Germany, and France, or to fulfil Caritas's earnest desire that she should remove to England with her. She could not and would not leave the little spot in Söderwyk, which was the home of her heart. There she lived on for many a quiet, lonely year. In Söderwyk, too, she died. She wished to be buried there. The count had died in Rödskrita, and was interred there in the family-vault of the Kronhelms. It could therefore hardly be considered improper, or give occasion for remark, that Caritas, who had come from England to take care of her mother during her last illness, had her buried in Söderwyk, where she died. There she now lies, beside her beloved husband, and the weeping-willows which overshadow his grave overshadow her grave too.



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